

**PREACHING THAT EDIFIES (UPBUILDS)
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
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ABSTRACT

This project examines the role of preaching in the edification (upbuilding) of the church. Special attention is given to its function in the ministry of edification within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This project is designed to help preachers discover why and how they might use their sermons to edify the listeners, both individually and corporately as members of the church.

Edification as used here is based on the New Testament concept of oikodomē, especially as found in Ephesians 4:11-16. It is an inclusive term for that which builds up the church through both the winning of persons to Christ and his church and the continuing development of members' faith and capacity to witness and serve as part of the church. It includes all that may enlighten, enliven, and strengthen the church's life and work in the world.

After background research into the ministry of edification and of preaching in general, attention is given to the preaching of four selected Disciples ministers in the Pacific Southwest Region during the last three decades. Through sermon analysis and interviews, an attempt is made to discover how these four preachers may have used sermons in the edification (upbuilding) of their congregations and thereby to arrive at some recommendations for preaching that edifies the Christian Church. Sermons are analyzed in relation to four categories: Purpose, Audience/Congregational Context, Content, and Broad Contextual Relationships.

Preaching that edifies includes both the proclamation of the gospel and its interpretation for the lives of the hearers, individually and corporately as a congregation. Such preaching places a responsibility on the preacher to be intentional in his or her sermon planning, efforts to know and speak to the congregation's needs, selection of content, and attempts to relate hearers to the world in which they live and serve. Preaching that edifies intentionally seeks to build up the church as a strong, spiritually healthy, effective force for God in the world.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Preaching has performed an important function in the life of the church since the church's beginnings. The Gospels report that Jesus went about preaching and teaching. The Book of Acts contains examples of the preaching of early church leaders, such as Peter and Paul. As missionaries spread out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, they went preaching the good news of God's redeeming action in Jesus Christ. The ministry of the Word and the sacraments have been central in the worship of the church throughout the centuries. Today the observance of the Lord's Supper and the preaching of the Word are still central in the worship life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In recent years, preaching has come under the scrutiny of both professional preachers and the people in the pews, calling for a reexamination of the function of preaching in the church.

This project examines the role of preaching in the edification (upbuilding) of the church. Special attention is given to its function in the ministry of edification within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Edification as used here is based on the New Testament concept of oikodomē especially as found in Ephesians 4:11-16.

Current Confusions Calls for This Examination

Confusion Concerning Preaching. There exists today some

confusion as to the role and importance of preaching in the church. Confusion exists as to what is expected to take place in and through preaching--both as to what the preacher intends to be the results of his/her preaching and what the listeners expect to receive from the preaching. This project is designed to help preachers identify some appropriate expectations through the intentional use of the sermon for the edification of the listeners, both individually and corporately.

Confusion Concerning the Relationship of Preaching to Other Ministerial Functions. At present there exists an artificial separation between preaching and some of the other ministerial functions carried on by the clergy and laity in the church. Preachers and hearers alike may not see the possible interrelationship of the sermon to pastoral calling, administration and organizational concerns, social action, and so forth. The ministry of edification as described in this paper assumes that this interrelationship should be recognized and strengthened.

Christian education is often viewed as being that which takes place in the Church School, study groups, and other planned situations, rather than recognizing that it takes place in many settings in the church, including the sanctuary. Thus, preachers and hearers alike may not view the sermon as an important teaching tool. Many adults receive little Christian education beyond what they receive through the Sunday sermon. Without creating an artificial separation between the teaching and proclamation functions of the sermon, the preacher may need to be

more intentional in the development of sermons to meet the educational needs of the hearers.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), like many other mainline denominations, is not growing significantly. There is a confusion within its membership as to what the church teaches about its faith and practice. What does it mean to join a Disciple congregation, and what is expected of members? Although there is a great deal of freedom within Disciple congregations regarding faith and practice, members may desire more guidance in their discovery of what it means to be an active Christian in today's secular society. The church as an institution needs constant reminders of what its mission is and guidance in working out that mission in the world. The sermon is an essential tool, and often the preacher's main tool, in edifying the congregation as a whole in these areas.

The findings and recommendations that come from this project may be helpful to Disciple preachers in the future as they seek to edify their listeners and build up the church as a strong, spiritually healthy, effective force for God in the world.

Confusion Concerning the Meaning of Edification.

"Edification" as used in this study is an inclusive term. It includes all that enriches and strengthens the life and work of the church, and brings its members to a fuller maturity in Christ. It includes "everything that makes for building up of the body, for the growth, the health, the fulness of the church

in the discharge of its servanthood."¹

This building up of the church involves both (1) the winning of persons to Christ and into his community of followers and (2) the continuing development of the members' faith and capacity to serve and witness for Christ in the world. Edification is a spiritual task shared by all members of the Christian community, but also it is the special responsibility of its pastoral leaders.

According to this definition of edification, both the proclamation of the gospel (to persons within and outside the church) and the interpretation of its implications for the hearers' lives are important and intertwined. Both may be present in preaching. Also worship, fellowship, social action, and other aspects of the church's life contribute to the edification of the corporate body and its individual members.

Of particular interest to this project is the role of preaching within the total ministry of edification. How might preaching be used to convince persons of the truth of the gospel and its relevance for them and for the world in which they live? How might preaching be intentionally used as a teaching tool, and as a means of equipping persons for their life and work as God's servants in the world? What are the major contributions and limitations of preaching within the total process of edification

¹Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany, 1967) p. 182.

or upbuilding of the church? It is hoped that these and related questions might be answered through this project's research of biblical, historical, and contemporary sources and the sermon analysis of the preaching of four selected Disciple ministers.

The Method of Examination

After background research into the ministry of edification and of preaching in general, this project concentrates on the preaching of selected Disciple ministers in the Pacific Southwest Region during the last three decades. Through sermon analysis this project undertakes to discover how these four preachers may have used their sermons for the edification or upbuilding of their congregations and thereby to arrive at some recommendations for preaching within the ministry of edification. It is hoped that these findings may contribute to the Oikodomē Consultation of the Disciples Seminary Foundation.

Through this research and sermon analysis, the project seeks to integrate Church History as the academic discipline and preaching/worship as the practical, arts of ministry discipline. To contribute to the project's examination of the preaching of selected ministers within a given geographical area and period of time, the Appendix includes a report on happenings in the Pacific Southwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from 1960-1980.

In addition to the analysis of selected sermons, the four ministers are interviewed to discover their own evaluation of

their preaching. The sermons are analyzed in relation to four categories: Purpose, Audience/Congregational Context, Content, and Broad Contextual Relationships. What is to be considered in each category is developed at the end of Chapter 3. It is not in the purview of this project to pass judgment on the sermons, but rather to learn from them.

The Project's Development

The next chapter attempts to develop what is meant by "ministry of edification." It includes (1) research into the biblical roots and some contemporary views related to the ministry of edification and (2) practical implications for the development of such a ministry in a congregation. As such, the chapter provides a theology of ministry upon which to base the project's examination of the role of preaching.

The third chapter focuses on how preaching has been, is, and may be viewed as an important tool for the edification of its hearers, individually and corporately. It provides background information important to the understanding of the sermon analysis reported in the next four chapters.

Chapters four through seven report findings from the analyses of selected sermons and interviews concerning the preaching of Dennis B. Savage, Wesley P. Ford, Edwin C. Linberg, and Kring Allen, respectively.

The final chapter summarizes much that was discovered in relation to the four categories of analysis. It suggests some conclusions regarding how preaching may be used in the

edification (upbuilding) of congregations and their members within the ministry they share as the body of Christ in the world.

CHAPTER 2

THE MINISTRY OF EDIFICATION

Basic Premise

The work of the ministry is to build up the body of Christ in, for, and through its life of worship, fellowship, witness, and service in the world. This ministry of edification is the mutual responsibility of all members of the Christian community,¹ but those set apart in the community as its pastoral leaders also are given the responsibility of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

God is recognized as the true Builder of the church, giving this ministry to its members and working in and through them in its fulfillment. For this purpose they are given gifts to be developed, shared, and used in the ministry of edification. The community recognizes the calling of certain men and women to function as their pastoral leaders.

This ministry of edification is rooted in biblical concepts, especially as articulated in Ephesians 4:11-16:

And his [Christ's] gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature

¹"Christian community" is used here to denote any and all manifestations of the church--congregational, denominational, universal--but much of this discussion will focus on the congregational manifestation.

manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; . . . speaking the truth in love, we are to grow in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

This ministry of edification involves the building up of the church both through (1) the winning of persons to Christ and into his body and (2) the continuing growth of all in it--growth in knowledge and understanding of their faith, commitment to Christ and his work, and capacity to serve and witness for Christ in the world. In building up the church, this ministry is directed both to those within and outside the community of Christ's followers. It is concerned about the spiritual and personal needs of those who become a part of the community, about their individual growth in relationship to Christ and each other, about their development as informed, capable servants of Christ in the world. This ministry is concerned about the church's mission in the world--about its work of loving service in meeting the spiritual and material needs of the world, about its evangelistic witness to the unchurched, about its role as a sign in and to the world of God's continuing loving action for the salvation of all humankind.

Edification is the corporate ministry of all Christians. According to Disciple educator and historian Ronald E. Osborn, it is "everything that makes for building up of the body, for the growth, the health, the fulness of the church in the discharge of its servanthood."²

²Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany, 1967) p. 182.

Within the Christian community, certain members are called to be the pastoral leaders in this ministry. Biblically, such leaders are given to the church by Christ, not to do this ministry for the other members, but rather to give leadership to the Christian community's shared work of ministry. They are to give leadership in preparing and enabling all members to serve together more effectively. This leadership is given through such functions of the pastors as proclaiming and interpreting the Word, presiding at worship and around the Lord's Table, teaching and training, overseeing the life and work of the community, facilitating others' involvement in this life and work, counseling and caring for members and others in need, and being willing to risk modeling what it might mean to live as God's servants and ambassadors of reconciliation in today's world.

The essence of the task which the church commits to its ministers is "to care for God's people and to equip the whole church for its work of ministry." The community sets them apart "with particular responsibility for building up the body of Christ."³

In studying the New Testament regarding the church's early ministry, the German theologian Hans Küng observed that the lists of leaders in such passages as Ephesians 4:11 point to the variety of ministerial functions which some persons performed within the community for the good of all, rather than the establishment of special offices. Now, as then, the gifts of ministry are not limited to any particular group of persons and are to be performed for the building up of the congregation.

³Ibid., p. 142.

To sum up then, according to the New Testament, the following characteristics are essential for the ministry of leadership in the congregation. It must (a) be a service to the congregation; (b) follow Jesus' norm, which permits no relationships of domination; (c) remain bound to the primary apostolic testimony; (d) exist in the midst of a plurality of different functions, ministries, charisms.⁴

Biblical Rootage for the Ministry of Edification

"Edification," "upbuilding," "strengthening," and "encouraging" are some English translations of a Greek word which is transliterated oikodomē. Osborn noted that by examining passages in the New Testament where the word oikodomē or related ideas appear, "we shall discover oikodomē as one of the controlling ideas of the New Testament."⁵ If this is so, and I believe it is, then the ministry of edification is firmly rooted in the life and work of the early church.

The Synoptic Gospels contain only the verb form of the word in the literal sense of building or constructing a structure. Paul (and possibly others writing in his tradition) used the verb and noun forms metaphorically, rather than literally, in the sense of building up the church or building up each other within it.

Metaphorically, the Christian community is called the house of God which is built by God, into which all Christians

⁴Hans Küng, Why Priests? (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) p. 50.

⁵Ronald E. Osborn, "The Building Up of the Church," Impact No. 7 (1981) 2.

(Jews and Gentiles) fit together as "living stones," and in which God dwells in the Spirit. The building metaphor for the church (with Christ as the cornerstone) is sometimes mixed with other metaphors, such as that of the body of Christ (with Christ as the head and the Christians as the parts).

The building up of the church is a process in which the members are empowered by God to participate as they are equipped to use their gifts by those given as their leaders (Ephesians 4:11-12). The edification takes place as a present process but also continues into the future as the Christians look toward the perfect completion of the building as an eschatological hope.

Edification refers primarily to the building up of the community as a whole, but also of the individuals within it.

[Oikodomē] denotes the goal of knowledge, yet also the inner growth of the community and the content and purpose of its liturgical life and its meetings. . . . The community as a whole, and each member in it, is advantaged and prospered by love. . . . The term edification comprises two aspects, on the one side inner strengthening in might and knowledge, and on the other outer winning and convincing. It corresponds to the congregation's process of growth, but this is to be understood in terms of Christ, the Spirit and the act of faith.⁶

Ephesians 4:7,11-16⁷ contains concepts important to our understanding of the ministry of edification, so we should look

⁶ O. Michel. "οἶκος, οἰκία, κ.τ.λ.," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 5:141-142.

⁷Scholars do not agree as to whether the Book of Ephesians was written by Paul or someone writing later under his name in an endeavor to express Paul's views in a current situation. However, its metaphorical use of oikodomē harmonizes with Paul's usage.

more closely at these verses. According to this passage, Christ is the giver of the gifts which the members of the church receive so that each one might make a fitting contribution to their shared work of ministry (i.e., witness and service in the continuation of the apostolic mission in the world as seen in Ephesians 3:4-10).

Special gifts of leadership are given to some--apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers--for the purpose of helping the rest develop and use their gifts in ministry, for the building up of the church. These leaders are given by Christ to the church as its servants so that the whole body might better carry out its task. Thus they are not set above the community, but are to serve as workers within it.

The leaders listed in verse 11 seem to be primarily ministers of the Word (those who preach and teach), but the inclusion of pastors (Shepherds) in the list suggests that some leaders also have other functions in the congregation. (The lists in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Romans 12:6-8 suggest a variety of functions to be performed by administrators, helpers, exhorters, speakers in tongues and interpreters, and others.)

In speaking of the Christian community's work and leadership here and elsewhere in the epistle, the writer includes both the church's worldwide (cosmic) and congregational dimensions. Some leaders seem to engage in an itinerant ministry of establishing new churches and making new converts in unchurched regions. Others appear to be more localized in their work. No indication is given as to how these leaders were

appointed by the early church except that the belief is that . . . they are given by Christ, however they were or are chosen.

Verses 15 and 16 give some description of the method and context for the community's shared ministry. The truth is to be spoken in love, presumably both within the community and outside to the unconverted. It is essential that the community recognize its dependence on Christ, its head, and that love be the controlling attitude, motive for action, and characteristic of the members' life together. The church will grow as it remains a confessing, loving community, working as a unit in the world.

Although the whole body is described as a growing, close knit unit, the individuals within it do not lose their distinctiveness. Each one is important and contributes to the unity and growth of the body. All have gifts and functions to perform which are necessary to the efficient working and upbuilding of the whole. It is essential that each part work properly. Christ is the source of the gifts and the growth, entrusting the members with responsibilities within the cooperative process.

Ephesians 2:17-22 also contains the building metaphor and the edification motif. Christ is the cornerstone of the building--the church. The apostles and prophets laid a foundation for the building by their preaching and teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The "structure" on that foundation is to be built up by the joining together of all who share a common allegiance to Christ (Jew and Gentile--thus all-inclusive). The church is to grow in perfection, building into it all these as the

household of God, until it becomes a fitting temple of God--a place where God's presence and will are acknowledged for the whole world to see; a place of worship, service, and witness.

Paul used the building metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:1-23, mixing it with an agricultural one to give a picture of growth and cooperative action. Divisiveness and the glorification of individuals within the church are decried. Each person has his or her contributions to make. Paul had laid a foundation for the Corinthian church by his preaching of Christ, but here he emphasizes the work of others who are building on that foundation. Those who would continue the building up of the church are admonished to take care how they build. The value of each person's contribution to this upbuilding will be tested for its current effectiveness and also in the eschatological judgment for its lasting effectiveness. The church does not exist for itself nor builds by its own power. It is God's temple. God is its source of growth and the judge of the work carried out by the "fellow workers" in its edification.

From 1 Corinthians 14 we gain another insight regarding the ministry of edification: all things in the church should contribute to the building up of the community. The use of one's gifts should be directed for the edification of all rather than for mere self-edification. Those God-given gifts that benefit the whole are to be valued more than those that do not. Thus, prophecy is of more value in the community's worship than speaking in tongues, unless there is an interpreter present.

From 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-34, we learn that care

must be taken as to how a Christian edifies or encourages others by his or her actions. The exercise of one's freedom in Christ must be considered in relation to its effect upon the consciences of others. Love and concern for others should motivate the Christian's actions, so that their faith is built up rather than weakened or torn down.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul again shows that edification is an individual concern, as well as a communal one. Members of the church are to "encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

Edification and Some Contemporary Views of Ministry

The following survey of selected contemporary writings on the nature of the church's ministry emphasizes some insights which I find helpful in understanding what I call the "ministry of edification." Writers and writings included in this survey are: T.W. Manson and his The Church's Ministry; Ronald E. Osborn and his In Christ's Place and article in Impact; Letty M. Russell and her Growth in Partnership; James C. Fenhagen and his Mutual Ministry; John E. Biersdorf and the book he edited, Creating an Intentional Ministry; H. Richard Niebuhr and The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry; Hans Küng and Why Priests? I also find Urban Holmes' concept of the "sacramental person" helpful as given in The Future Shape of Ministry.

On the following pages, I attempt to highlight the concepts in these writings which seem especially illuminating and supportive of my thinking regarding the ministry of edification.

Not all the following sources refer to edification. Some use edification differently from the emphases given it in this study. However, their search for an understanding of ministry contributes to my own. I do not attempt to interpret the totality of each writer's ideas on ministry but merely to lift up aspects pertinent to this study. In order to do justice to the ideas being considered, I quote extensively.

This survey begins with the basic, general concepts of ministry and edification found in T. W. Manson and Ronald E. Osborn, and moves on to pick up additional insights which suggest how these concepts of ministry may take shape in congregations and affect the actions of their pastoral leaders.

T. W. Manson. This English biblical scholar reminded us of the basic truth concerning the church and its ministry--its fundamental relationship to Jesus Christ.

The Church is the Body of Christ; and the life of the Church is the continuation of the Messianic ministry. . . . The Son of Man came not to be ministered to but to minister, and to give his life an ransom for many. . . . But if the Messianic career has to be worked out in terms of service and sacrifice, the followers of the Messiah must find their destiny along the same lines. Every function of the members of Christ's Body is a diakonia [service], and Christ himself is the primary holder of every diakonia.⁸

Manson expanded on what it might mean to continue the Messianic ministry. In the following statements, he used "apostolic" basically to mean the missionary task of the church, which was begun by the apostles and must be continued by the

⁸T. W. Manson. The Church's Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1948) pp. 26-27.

apostles and must be continued by the church today.

Now the Church . . . has to present the Gospel to those outside; and it can only do that effectively as its members live according to Christ in their relations to one another. In other words the Church has a dual role--apostolic in relation to those outside and pastoral in relation to those within. . . . Both ministries serve the same purpose, the building up (oikodomē) of the Body of Christ whether by bringing in new members or by making better members of those already in. The apostolic task is one of proclaiming the good news (kerygma); the pastoral task is that of instruction in Christian truth and training in Christian worship (didache). These are not separate things; they are two aspects of a single life. Sometimes and in some cases one aspect is more prominent than another; but neither is absent in a healthy Church life.⁹

The result of apostolic work is a local congregation; and the local congregation, as part of the Body of Christ, itself enters into the apostolic ministry. This ministry of the local community is twofold: to proclaim the Kingdom to those who are still outside and to manifest the Kingdom in its own community life; to declare Christ to the world and to show the Lord's life and death and risen life within its own borders; to convert the non-Christian and to "edify" the Christian.

[In a footnote]: And "edifying" means more than gratifying his pious feelings with nice sermons or appealing ritual. It means building him into the structure of the Church; making him a better, healthier, more efficient member of the Body of Christ.¹⁰

These quotations indicate the relationship of outward, apostolic ministry and the inner, pastoral ministry as inseparable aspects of one life serving one purpose--the upbuilding of the church. Thus, the ministry of edification may

⁹Ibid., pp. 35-36.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 58-59.

be seen as the continuation of the Messianic ministry in the world.

Ronald E. Osborn. Perhaps Osborn's writings and teaching have influenced my ideas concerning the ministry of edification more than any others. He affirmed the following theses about the Christian ministry:

Christian ministry is directed toward the world.

The ministry of Jesus Christ provides the model for all Christian ministry.

Christian ministry is a responsibility laid upon the entire church of Christ.

Nevertheless the church must entrust some of its members with particular responsibility for equipping all to fulfill the common ministry, and these the church ordains as ministers.

The purpose of all Christian ministry is servanthood.

In order to fulfill its servanthood in the world, the church must order its entire life and ministry in faithfulness to the spirit and character of Christ's own ministry.¹¹

Osborn emphasized the importance of the concept of edification in the life and work of the servant-community, the church. For him, oikodomē (upbuilding, edification, strengthening, developing, encouraging) is not only a New Testament idea. It is the present task into which God (as Builder of the church) calls all servant people to join together. "Upbuilding--that is what our ministry is all about."¹²

¹¹Osborn, In Christ's Place, p. 7.

¹²Osborn, "The Building Up of the Church," p. 17.

Edification involves not only the building up of the spiritual life of the believers, making them better, more efficient members of the church, but also the "building up of the church itself, strengthening the church for its mission of servanthood."¹³ The process of building up the church as a whole and its individual members is "always with a missionary and not an introverted purpose."¹⁴ The servant church's ministry is directed outward, and its life must be ordered to further that ministry in and to the world. "Everything which enhances the health of the church and increases its capacity for service and witness is part of this process of building up."¹⁵

In ordering its life and work, the church must seek to facilitate this upbuilding process. All members share in this process of edification. They need to be equipped to carry out their responsibilities according to the gifts they have been given. These gifts should be recognized, developed, and shared. Within the loving fellowship, all are encouraged to care for and edify each other, as well as to reach out as servants in and to the world outside that fellowship.

In his list of theses about the ministry, Osborn recognized the need for certain persons to be ordained as ministers, entrusted with particular responsibilities in this edification process. Of these ministers among the servant-people, he wrote:

¹³Osborn, In Christ's Place, p. 182.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Osborn, "The Building up of the Church," p. 3

The ministers of the Word, and their ministry, are the gift of Christ the head to his body the church. He gives them to enable the church to know itself in the light of the gospel, to strengthen the community for its mission of corporate servanthood, to equip it for fulfilling its ministry in the world.¹⁶

Letty M. Russell. This prominent woman theologian and educator wrote:

The motif of edification or upbuilding is key for the understanding of how we educate for partnership by partnering as well. It is possible to speak of oikodomē as partnering, for it is the way we build one another as participants in Christ's koinonia.¹⁷

Russell wrote Growth in Partnership as an attempt to discover how to educate persons for partnership which she had described earlier as koinonia: "a new focus of relationship in a common history of Jesus Christ that sets persons free for others."¹⁸ Partnership with God, each other, and the world in God's New Creation is a gift from God, but "we learn to be partners by being partners."¹⁹ She pointed to Ephesians 4:1-16 as a passage describing the way partnering or equipping of the saints takes place. Emphasizing the importance of the context of love in this process of partnership, she indicated that:

Christ provides gifts to the church so that it can carry out its ministry of building up the body. In this way the upbuilding in love leads to maturity in Christ for all persons who share in Christ's ministry to the whole inhabited world. The word "upbuilding" (oikodomē) is a key motif in

¹⁶Osborn, In Christ's Place, p. 84.

¹⁷Letty M. Russell, Growth in Partnership (Philadelphia: Westminster 1981) p. 45.

¹⁸Letty M. Russell, The Future of Partnership (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979) p. 18.

¹⁹Russell, Growth in Partnership, p. 39.

Eph. 4:1-16 and in the Pauline letters, where love is understood as that which builds up or edifies (I Cor. 8:1). . . . Oikodomē in the household of faith seeks to build up the members of the household so that they may be part of God's householding of New Creation.²⁰

. . . If we ask how to equip the saints, we find that the purpose is also the method. People grow toward maturity in Christ by participating in the work of service and mutual partnering.²¹

I differ with Russell in that she designated the task of upbuilding the church as the congregation's educational ministry. I agree that upbuilding in love is the church's educational task, but it is more than an educational task. Russell seemed to equate the ministry of education with the total ministry of edification, rather than as one essential dimension of this total ministry. She defined the educational ministry as referring "to any form of serving in the name of Jesus Christ that involves us in mutual growth and fuller self-actualization of God's intended humanity."²² In my opinion, she redeemed herself somewhat when, later in the book, she joined the educational ministry with the prophetic ministry and the theological ministry as the style of partnership for service. Thus she added to the communal, educational ministry, the upbuilding that comes through the living out of the gospel story in and outside the community. Theologically, acting as partners involves viewing the present in the light of God's ultimate intention for New Creation.

"Education for partnership happens as we invite one

²⁰Ibid., p. 45.

²¹Ibid., p. 49.

²²Ibid., 58.

another to be partners together in God's liberating action."²³ Another way of saying that might be that the edification of the church and its members happens as they invite one another to be partners together in God's liberating action in the world.

James C. Fenhagen. The "ministry of enablement" developed by this Anglican scholar also bears much in common with what I call the ministry of edification. As he explained:

The concept of "ministry as enablement" is firmly rooted in the New Testament understanding of the Church's mission. The way in which Jesus empowered his disciples for their ministry had the effect of enabling them to exercise ministries that built on the unique gifts which each possessed. The phrase, "And he began to teach them," recurs again and again. "Come with me, by yourselves, to some place where you can rest quietly," Jesus said to his disciples as he enabled them to find inner nourishment for what they were being asked to do (Mk. 8). "After this," Luke records, "the Lord appointed a further seventy-two and sent them on ahead in pairs to every town and place he was going to visit himself" (Lk. 10:1). These were all enabling functions, crucial to our understanding of the task of the Church.²⁴

Enabling is an essential aspect of edification, and I can agree with Fenhagen that Jesus' acts of enabling--through teaching, providing opportunities for inner nourishment, pairing the disciples for mutual support, and giving them experiences as missionaries under his guidance--provide examples for ways people can be enabled for mission today. Thus, the disciples were being edified or equipped by Jesus.

Fenhagen found the charge to carry out the ministry of

²³Ibid., p. 160.

²⁴James C. Fenhagen, Mutual Ministry (New York: Seabury, 1977) p. 99.

enablement most clearly stated in Ephesians 4:11-14, just as I found the ministry of edification rooted in that passage.

The task of the Church's ministry is to equip one another so that all might live as Christ's servants in the world. The key word is "equip," which in its root form refers to the "building up" of the body, the community of faith, and the "spiritual strengthening necessary for the 'service of Christ' in the world." The word "enablement" has a similar meaning, although coming from a different root. Enablement refers to the process by which we make it possible for others to find the strength and authority to fulfill the purposes of their lives. As the laos--the people of God ordained or not ordained--we have been sent into the world to exercise ministry according to the gifts given us by the Spirit. . . . The task of the congregation, therefore, is to enable these gifts to be put to use. We are a community of people gathered by the Spirit to proclaim and celebrate Christ's redeeming activity in the world. We exist not for ourselves, but on behalf of the world of which we are a part. The process by which men, and women, and children are enabled to exercise ministry, both within the community and in society at large, is fundamental to who we are.²⁵

How is this ministry of enablement to be fulfilled? What are the functions of church leaders? Fenhagen emphasized a systemic model of organization as one that fit the needs and objectives of the ministry of enablement.

The function of the leader is not primarily to do ministry, but to help others identify and carry out the ministries which are uniquely theirs. The emphasis is on helping the various parts of the organization maintain sufficient connection with each other so that each part enables the other to carry out common objectives. . . . The strength of the systemic model is that it places heavy emphasis on shared authority and mutual ministry, encouraging persons to move from a posture of dependence to that of broad interdependence.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., p. 100.

²⁶Ibid., p. 103.

For Fenhagen the pastor is the focal point of the congregation's organizational life, and can facilitate or block the enabling process. His or her functions within this process include that of (1) being supportive and helping members to be supportive to each other; (2) providing sources of energy to others through the proclamation and celebration of the story of redemption, a system of communication and feedback, and a caring presence and active listening; and (3) providing educational opportunities and resources and engaging with the congregation in a process of gathering information, goal setting, and evaluation.

John E. Biersdorf. Creating an Intentional Ministry, edited by this educator, emphasized some of these same ministerial functions in a model of ministry built on the twin "poles" of intentionality and negotiation. The minister as the "intentional leader" of the congregation negotiates with the other members in the creation of an "intentional congregation."

Negotiation is the way in which we work together to make the possible become a reality. It involves having both vision that gives our career intentionality, and effectiveness in realizing that intention. It requires a style that is open and that trusts the partners in the negotiations to make their unique contributions to the realities that will emerge out of the negotiations. It means identifying the ideas that are important and meaningful for the church and developing a consensus about the most effective strategies for addressing those issues.²⁷

In this negotiation, the minister must be willing to let others know his or her own vision, values, feelings, skills, and

²⁷John E. Biersdorf, "A New Model of Ministry, in Creating an Intentional Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) p. 19.

preferences, but also to be open to their visions, values, feelings, skills, and preferences. The process of negotiation requires regular opportunities for all those involved to talk about what is going on, to receive feedback about the effectiveness of their mission and ministry, and to develop new goals and strategies as needed.

Not all members will agree with all aspects of the intentional ministry developed within the congregation, but they will be free to identify those aspects in which they can become involved. The goals of the congregation should recognize the differences within its membership. Intentionality does not necessarily mean uniformity.

The more heterogeneous a congregation is in value and social orientation, the more the minister is able to negotiate new models of mission based on the pluralism of populations within the community of believers. He or she is able to develop a strong model of multiple ministries which aid, correct, support, and critique one another. Such a pattern of negotiation necessitates a minister who does not see his or her theological and social understandings as normative for all humankind.²⁸

In an intentional congregation, the intentional leader does play a crucial role:

The most prominent characteristic of the intentional minister is vision. The most important skill of the intentional minister is effectiveness in negotiating that vision with the officers and congregation so that everything the congregation does and experiences is informed by that vision. The intentional minister is characterized by a passionate purposefulness and a significant degree of effectiveness in sharing that passion with the congregation and involving the

²⁸Thomas C. Campbell, "Arenas of Negotiation" in *ibid.*, p. 51.

congregation in the achievement of that purpose.²⁹

. . . To speak of intentionality in ministry is to ask, what kind of spirit, what kind of controlling overriding thrust animates our ministry, and what vision does it disclose?³⁰

. . . The intentional minister is not simply a passive process-enabler as the congregation develops goals but actively negotiates for goals that represent the best possible fit with personal strengths, commitments, and satisfactions.³¹

However, the vision, skills, and competencies needed by the congregation are not limited to those of the minister. There must be teamwork, mutual trust, and accountability within the context of the congregation. The minister is not the sole and lonely performer for the entertainment of spectator members. The leadership must be committed to open negotiations between differing goals in ways that enable all to engage in intentional ministry fitting to their strengths, commitments and satisfactions.

Ephesians 4:11 and related passages were used by some writers of this book to emphasize the bountiful gifts God has given the congregation to help the church as a whole participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Each person has gifts and thus responsibilities to assume in the shared ministry.

The ministerial leadership affirms the Christian community by being willing to negotiate with the members to achieve a concensus on goals and strategies related to their

²⁹James Gunn, "Goal Setting and Evaluation" in *ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 124.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 133.

shared purposes, rather than plowing ahead to do his or her own thing and rebuffing common efforts. He or she does see that pushing the community as a whole to be intentional about its ministry is part of the enabling process necessary for the community to use the gifts given by the Spirit to the various members. This enabling process is done in the context of loving concern. Paul did not separate the necessity for building up the community in love from engagement in mission.

A community depends on each of its members sharing in the vision and experiences of purpose and mission that holds the group together. For the community to be Christian it is required that the common vision and tasks come from God. Neither the vision of the community's purpose nor the vision of action is the private property of the pastor. . . . It is the "whole body," because of the working together of each of its parts, which produces the growth which strengthens it in love.³²

This idea of intentionality and negotiation within the congregation fits well with the ministry of edification being developed in this paper. There must be intentionality in the edification process. The "saints" are being equipped for a purpose within the context of a shared faith and commitment to the church's mission in the world. Since it is a shared ministry, the gifts, visions, and concerns of all members should be a part of the negotiations that take place as they plan and work together. The picture of the intentional leader that appears in the preceding quotations is one that can be affirmed as an image that fits well with the leader's role in equipping

³²Stephen Charles Mott, "Intentional Ministry as Gift of the Spirit," in *ibid.*, p. 225.

the "saints" in this ministry of edification. It is the picture of a person passionately and purposefully involved with others in the openness of shared vision and gifts.

H. Richard Niebuhr. If the last two models of ministry (the ministry of enablement and the intentional ministry) showed implicitly or explicitly the importance of the minister's administrative function in the congregation, Niebuhr went further to make it a primary function or approach to ministry for the "pastoral director."

This prominent theologian and educator did not describe an ideal model of ministry so much as point to what he saw (in 1956) as the shape of ministry "emerging out of contemporary study of the Bible, participation in the tradition of the Church, the experiences and reflections of ministers in our day, and the needs of the time."³³ Whereas in the past either the altar or the pulpit might have been seen as symbolic of priest's or minister's main task, today the office might be seen in this way. "The minister now has an office from which he directs the activities of the Church, where also he studies and does some of his pastoral counseling."³⁴

Niebuhr saw the administration or overseeing of the complex, democratically organized life of the church as becoming the major concern of the pastoral director in building up or

³³H. Richard Niebuhr. The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956) p. 79.

³⁴Ibid., p. 81.

edifying the church:

In his work the pastoral director carries on all the traditional functions of the ministry--preaching, leading the worshiping community, administering the sacraments, caring for souls, presiding over the church. . . . [But] His first function is that of building or "edifying" the church; he is concerned in everything that he does to bring into being a people of God who as a Church will serve the purpose of the Church in the local community and the world.³⁵

. . . The work that lays the greatest claim to his time and thought is the care of the church, the administration of a community that is directed toward the whole purpose of the Church, namely, the increase among men of the love of God and neighbor; for the Church is becoming the minister and its "minister" is its servant, directing it in its service.³⁶

The democratic institutions in Western society tend to emphasize the executive or managerial approach to leadership. In the light of this, Niebuhr concluded that:

The question is not whether the ministry will reflect the institutional forms of leadership in the world but whether it will reflect these with the difference that Christian faith and church life require; whether, in short, the minister will remain "man of God" despite the fact that he is now a director instead of a ruler. Perhaps the kinds of studies that have been made . . . may show how much the pastoral director of our time, as pastoral preacher, teacher, counselor, and leader of worship has also become the democratic pastoral administrator, that is to say, a man charged with the responsibility and given the authority to hold in balance, to invigorate and to maintain communication among a host of activities and their responsible leaders, all directed toward a common end.³⁷

Niebuhr pointed to one of the main problems facing the pastoral director in this description--that of the need to remain

³⁵Ibid., p. 82.

³⁶Ibid., p. 83.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 90-91.

a "man [or woman] of God" rather than just a manager of an institution. The pastoral director's involvement in preaching, teaching, presiding at worship, and caring for persons should help him or her from falling into the trap of becoming a glorified manager or the "passive process-enabler" referred to in the previous model of ministry. Also, it is important that the pastoral director keep before the congregation that the purpose of the church's work is directed toward the world--to the increase of love of God and of neighbor within the church and in society. Niebuhr recognized that the pastoral director's task was to enable the Christian community as a whole to minister in the world. The pastoral director must not just be an enabler of others, but a pastor involved with them in this shared ministry in the world.

Although much that Niebuhr wrote concerning the edifying and enabling functions of the pastoral director fits well with my basic premise regarding ministry, I see the problem of an overemphasis on the managerial role. Also, there seemed to be something impersonal and passionless about this pastoral director. No longer a "ruler," this "director" seems to have lost some essential leadership qualities. To counter that image, the pastoral director may need to have some of the vision, commitment, and passionate purposefulness of the "intentional minister" of the previous model and some of the spiritual and personal qualities seen in the "congregational leader" in the next model.

Hans Küng. In Why Priests? Küng wrote as a Roman

Catholic theologian concerning the priesthood in his church. However, his description of the "congregational leader" provides insight into the nature and work of Protestant ministers, as well as Catholic priests. This "congregational leader" has much in common with the "pastoral leader" in the ministry of edification being developed in this paper. K  ng's description of the qualities of leadership and functions within the ministry are important and need serious consideration.

The ministry of leadership within the ministering congregation is seen in relationship to its functions rather than office. Some of K  ng's conclusions about the church's early ministry as found in the New Testament were quoted earlier in this paper. The following statements are pertinent here:

We can take it as self-evident from the New Testament that there exist countless differences . . . not only among persons but also among functions. Inasmuch as this indeterminate multiplicity and differentiation of functions, tasks and ministries exist, it is misleading to speak of Church office in the singular.³⁸

. . . Not miracles but ministry to the advantage of the congregation is the sign of a genuine calling. Thus every ministry in the Church is from the outset oriented toward conjointly responsible action, mutual understanding in the spirit of collegiality, exchange of ideas after the manner of partners, communication and dialogue.³⁹

The ministry of leadership is not one of domination but of service to the community (whether a congregation, diocese, state Church, etc.). It is a spiritual leadership. It is not one that absorbs all functions in an autocratic authority,

³⁸K  ng, p. 37.

³⁹Ibid., p. 38.

but one ministry in the midst of a multiplicity of other charisms and functions: a stimulating, coordinating and integrating ministry to the congregation and the other ministries, whether these are permanent (catechists, administrators, social welfare workers, various auxiliary ministries, theologians) or not (groups for making visits, various acts of individual initiative, etc.).⁴⁰

Congregational leadership aims, within limits at the "building up of the congregation," in the full biblical sense. Nothing would be more mistaken than to regard the Church leader as a kind of functionary, a bureaucrat and manager of the Church, however much office work and management may be linked with Church leadership in modern society and the Church. ⁴¹

This leadership takes place basically through the proclamation of the Word. All Christians can and should proclaim the Word through their witness in the world and to each other, but the congregational leader has the "permanent public responsibility" for the ministry of the Word through preaching and "words of absolution." The gospel is what brings Christians together as a congregation, and it is through its proclamation that "the Church is constantly built up anew and sent again into secular everyday life."⁴² Through the proclaiming of the Word, the leader contributes to the unity of the Church as a believing, confessing community. The leader stimulates the people and gives them ideas. Depending on the situation, the leader points to questions concerning what is happening in the world and the place of the church in it. Thus, he/she more often raises the right questions rather than gives answers.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 83.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 102.

⁴²Ibid., p. 103.

As a seeker among seekers, the leader helps the community "with the glad and liberating message, through the needs and expectations of the time, of the individual and of society . . . to strengthen, console, raise up, liberate, gladden and invite in a variety of ways to commitment in deed."⁴³ It is through the ministry of the Word that the leader escapes the danger of being merely "an ecclesiastical functionary." This ministry of the Word is seen, of course, in relation to the ministry of the sacraments.

Küng also emphasized the ministry of committed love. Although all Christians should practice their faith in love, the congregational leader bears the public responsibility of seeing that the Christian community goes on in "ordered freedom," as a community of committed love in its life together and before the world. This ministry of committed love reaches beyond the congregation. The leader involves himself/herself and the Christian community in the important questions of society to which the gospel message speaks. Through this committed service of love, the congregation's presider leads the people, measuring everything against the norm of the gospel. Thus the leader is "selfless yet powerfully active, modest and yet resolute, constantly rousing and stimulating afresh in public and in private, but sometimes perhaps also restraining and moderating. . . ."⁴⁴

⁴³Ibid., p. 104.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 107.

With modesty and unpretentiousness, the leader can become "the inspirer, moderator, and animator of the congregation." Through his/her influence, hidden talents may be discovered, energies released, enthusiasm aroused, and resources directed into desirable channels. Thus the leader can be the inspirer of the congregation.

What does it mean to be the moderator of the congregation?

Even if he does not mistake administration for leadership, he will not be able to get along without organization . . . will try to win the consent of his fellow workers in all important matters . . . will inform himself as well as he can and from as many different sources as possible . . . will constantly allow scope for freedom, will promote individual initiative, will often merely try to set things going and coordinate the resources . . . will help people endure strains and try to bring about a fair settlement of conflicts. In this way he is the prudent moderator of the congregation.⁴⁵

Effective leadership does not come through mere bureaucratic routine or hectic activity but involves "living from the depths," knowing the traditions and values of the congregation, keeping the larger picture in mind, taking into account individual interests and viewpoints, providing needed information, and facilitating communication. Thus the leader can become the "soul" of the whole or "animator" of the congregation.

In whatever the leader is and does, he/she points always to the center of the faith, to Jesus as Lord. The faith and life of the community is built up. The leader exercises more than mere "task leadership" in the use of his/ her skills, knowledge,

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 113-114.

and experience, but also "social emotional leadership":

Thus the congregational leader will not only cause healthy unrest, but also provide help, strength and security, and in this way arouse greater readiness. . . . he sees to the cohesion of his community, keeps tensions in balance and represents his community's high esteem for certain ideals.⁴⁶

Urban T. Holmes, III. The "congregational leader" described by K  ng has much in common with the "sacramental person" emphasized by this Episcopalian scholar:

In many Christian communities there is a sense of the pastor as the sacramental person, he who embodies in his presence with others the transcultural, transcendent person of God. But these instances are too few.⁴⁷

Through this survey of some contemporary models of ministry and the style of leadership within them, a picture of what I call the ministry of edification has developed. In the last two sections, an attempt will be made to summarize some of the insights thus gained and coordinate them into an integrated whole.

The Nature of the Church Being "Built Up"

An understanding of "what" is being built up is as important as discovering the "why" and "how" of church edification. What is the nature of the church that is to be built up through the ministry of edification?

The image of "church" which the members and their leaders

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁷Urban T. Holmes, The Future Shape of Ministry (New York: Seabury, 1971) p. 165.

share will determine much that they do together in edifying the whole and each other within it. The process of helping a congregation become intentional in its ministry involves negotiating a vision of "church" which will give direction to their life together and their outward thrust into the world. In some cases, before a congregation can be built up in the light of a new vision, there may be a need for some rebuilding--reorienting, relearning, recommitting. The members may need to work together in converting their old "structure" into one that may be growing "into a holy temple in the Lord " (Ephesians 2:21).

In contrast to the picture of the church seen in the biblical and contemporary sources examined above, some congregations seem to be trying to build what Holmes called "The Teahouse on Elm Street" in which the clergy perform a "geisha" function for the members who retreat there, seeking peace and assurance and a "gospel" divorced from the real world. Others may seem more concerned with preserving and renovating than in building. Holmes referred to the "introverted church" which is more concerned about its survival than its mission; about its internal affairs, rituals, and organization than in engaging in a corporate ministry in and to the world. 48

The vision of "church" which gives direction to the ministry of edification as described in this paper is not concerned with building either a teahouse or an introverted

⁴⁸Ibid., pp.121 and 123.

church--quite the opposite! The church that has been pictured on these pages is a loving, witnessing, serving community, carrying on a vital mission in and to the world. Both as a corporate body and through the lives of its members, it seeks to be a transforming, liberating, enlivening force for God in the world. It is built up for and through its missionary task. It does not provide a retreat from the world; it equips its members for their work of witness and service within the Christian community and in society at large. Its members learn to be servants, proclaimers, and partners by being such, by participating together in ministry and mission and inviting others to join in the great endeavor.

The church seeks to manifest in its inner, communal life the reality of the Kingdom it proclaims to the world. Through its worship, preaching and teaching, fellowship, mutual caring and concern, and acts of love, it seeks to grow in knowledge, unity, and effectiveness as God's servant people. In its life of faith and love, it seeks to become a "structure" through which God works--a "structure" empowered and shaped by God's presence and will--and thus to become a sign of God's activity in the world.

The members grow together in a context of "truth spoken in love" (Ephesians 4:15). The truth upon which it builds is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In love, the members encourage and edify one another, building a community in which they experience support, trust, mutual recognition and development of gifts, freedom, and the challenge to grow and act. In such a community, all share in a ministry of mutuality and partnership. The

community intentionally orders its life and work so that the members are enabled to participate in this ministry in ways fitting well with their gifts, commitments, and understanding of the church's mission.

Within this shared ministry, the pastoral leaders have special responsibilities and leadership functions. These leaders are the subject of the next section. They minister within the organized life of the Christian community which we need to examine more closely.

The modern church commonly identifies certain dimensions within its life and work. How might these be a part of the ministry of edification? These dimensions include worship (preaching, the Lord's Supper, etc.), education, fellowship, pastoral care, administration, evangelism, social action and outreach (world mission). These dimensions may be organized in a variety of ways. Sometimes one dimension may be emphasized; sometimes another. Fenhagen recommended the systemic model of organization as appropriate for an effective mutual ministry. Certain denominational polities may suggest particular models. Some congregations are experimenting with innovative, flexible models. Whatever organizational model is used, it should be chosen with intentionality in the light of the Christian community's vision of its purpose, the nature of its shared ministry, and its current goals and strategies for an effectively carried out mission in and to the world.

Worship which builds up through the praise of God, the reading of scripture, celebration of the Lord's Supper,

preaching, and other liturgical elements is central to the ministry of edification. Theologian Karl Barth wrote (in Kirchliche Dogmatik) of the importance of worship in the church's edification: the community should be edified and edify itself in its worship if nowhere else. The passages examined in 1 Corinthians earlier in this paper emphasized that members' contributions in the community's worship should edify the congregation. In the previous section, some of K  ng's insights regarding the role of preaching in edifying the church were given in some detail. Osborn wrote that "authentic preaching of the gospel of Christ edifies the hearers and builds up the church in the full range of concerns which make up God's purpose."⁴⁹

Church education which builds up persons of all ages in their knowledge and experience of the faith undergirds and permeates the ministry of edification. Such education does not just take place in classrooms and planned teaching-learning situations, but in and through the community's total life. Church educator John H. Westerhoff III has pointed out:

Daily, each person who claims to be a Christian communicates through his words and actions his understanding of the Christian faith. In the same manner the church, as a community and institution, communicates through its corporate life the nature and character of the Christian faith. It is primarily through such means that children and others learn what it means to be a Christian. . . The church communicates its faith by being the community of faith, by offering to persons an experience of its message.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Osborn, "The Building Up of the Church," p. 22

⁵⁰John H. Westerhoff, Values for Tomorrow's Children (Philadelphia: Pilgrim, 1976) pp. 6-7.

The Christian community must both proclaim the good news of Christ and offer opportunities for persons to learn what this means for their lives by living it. Educators have long known that persons learn best by doing and not by hearing alone. This fact was emphasized by Letty Russell in relation to partnering.

Fellowship also undergirds and permeates the ministry of edification. In whatever the members are doing together, they have the opportunity to upbuild one another in love and to grow together as parts of the body of Christ. Within this context of edifying love and mutual ministry, the pastoral care of persons becomes more than solely the responsibility of the pastoral leader. All share in it as they are able, whether as individuals on a one-to-one basis; as members of groups which regularly call on the ill, shut-ins, inactive members; as part of small support groups organized to minister to special needs; and/or as trained pastoral counselors. The church's pastoral care reaches out to all persons within the community and beyond to upbuild and support them in their daily lives, as well as to offer counseling to persons with specific problems. Thus pastoral care of persons becomes an enabling process within the ministry of edification.

Administration has not always been appreciated as a vital dimension of the church's life and work. However, several of the contemporary sources examined above pointed out its importance in enabling the community as a whole and individual members to intentionally develop their mutual ministry. It becomes a means through which all are built up and equipped to use their gifts of ministry. Mutually agreed upon goals and strategies become the

means by which they work and grow together. Some of those sources also warned of some possible pitfalls which this dimension of the church contains when it is divorced from worship, education, pastoral care, social action, and other vital concerns. Administration cannot be an end in itself, but serves as the means of facilitating the effectiveness of the other dimensions of ministry in the fulfillment of the church's mission.

The ministry of edification builds up the church both through its pastoral dimensions within the Christian community and by reaching out to convince and win others for Christ and the church. Evangelism is one of the basic ways the church reaches out into the world. The church evangelizes through the proclamation of the good news both by word and deed. Of the leaders mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, the apostles, evangelists, and, to a large degree, the prophets directed their ministry beyond the local, established congregation. Methods of evangelism may change, but the imperative to evangelize the world remains a vital aspect of the church's mission.

This mission is also carried out through the church's social action and outreach (world mission) efforts. As stated above, the church seeks to be a transforming, liberating, enlivening force for God in the world. When problems, events, and situations in society present the church with the imperative to speak and act in the light of its best understanding of the gospel, it is part of the church's ministry of edification to inform and facilitate the members, individually and corporately,

in such speaking and acting. The ministry of edification functions both before and during the members' acts of witness and service. As Russell pointed out, people learn by doing; they become by being. The Christian community is edified as its members live their faith daily and engage in mission in and to the world. Edification also involves reflection, feedback, and redefining of goals and plans after the church acts.

Within the ministry of edification all these dimensions of the church's life and work should aid, support, inform, and correct each other for the upbuilding of the whole, according to God's purposes.

The Pastoral Leader in the Ministry of Edification

As it has been stated, within the Christian community certain leaders are recognized (ordained). In our earlier survey of contemporary models, several indications were given as to what such a leader might or might not be. Perhaps some of the negative designations need to be discarded first.

This leader is not a ruler or "autocratic authority" in the Christian community, or even a "benevolent dictator." He or she does not do ministry for the others in the community, relegating the others to mere spectators or minor players in a drama he or she is directing and assuming the star role. On the other hand, he or she is not a "passive process-enabler," a mere manager of an institution, or an "ecclesiastical functionary."

Some of the positive images and descriptions given by some of the sources reported on above include: "intentional

leader," "servant within a servant community," "partner," "enabler" who supports and provides sources of energy and resources, "a caring presence," "visionary," "passionately purposeful negotiator," "pastoral director" (with the qualifications given above), "congregational leader," "seeker among seekers," "inspirer, moderator, and animator of the congregation," and "sacramental person." These words and phrases call to mind much that has already been written about the qualities and methods of leadership emphasized by the contemporary models, and which can be affirmed here.

The pastoral leader is a caring, loving person who acts intentionally within a shared ministry. In all that he or she does--whether preaching, teaching, presiding in worship, administering, caring for persons, risking with others in witness and service in the world--the pastoral leader seeks to edify, to build up the whole and the parts, to enable and equip others for and in ministry. He or she does not exercise leadership as one above the others, but as one participating with them. Yet there is an element that sets him or her apart as one with "public responsibility" to proclaim and interpret the good news of Christ for our time in order to convince, admonish, and move the Christian community to committed, faithful action.

The pastoral leader is a minister of the Word, a preacher and teacher. This function may be carried out formally through sermons, seminars, and classes, but also informally in discussions, conversations, committee meetings, pastoral calling, and by the example of one seeking to live the gospel daily. He or

she has an "input" responsibility--to speak the truth in love whether or not the hearers want it spoken; to feed in information, interpretation, and evaluation where needed; to ask the right questions and point to new or overlooked considerations; to provide resources and opportunities for learning; and to speak a prophetic, challenging word when needed--perhaps even to tear down temporarily in order to rebuild in the light of God's purposes for the church and the world. The leader recognizes that he or she does not have the only valuable input needed by the community and so is also an attentive listener who opens the way for others' input.

Much has already been said about the importance of the administrative leadership to be exercised in the Christian community so that does not need to be repeated here. The pastoral leader must often initiate and intentionally seek to shape the community's process of setting goals, developing strategies, and organizing for action. However, in the shared, edifying ministry emphasized here, the leader recognizes that when all members are truly enabled to share in this process, what eventually takes shape and is done may be quite different--yet perhaps much better--than what he or she originally envisioned.

Russell provides an insight that might be considered here. In acting as partners, there is often the need for acting with "calculated inefficiency" so time is taken to discover and develop the talents and insights of even the most shy members.⁵¹

⁵¹Russell, pp. 33 and 36.

The most efficient way to do something may not be the most effective way in the light of the basic objectives of a ministry of edification. To equip others for their work of ministry takes effort which will eventually build up the work of the whole community.

The pastoral leader seeks to do all the above in the context of love. He or she needs to know not only the gospel message and signs of the times within society, he or she needs to know each and every member of the congregation--their needs, their talents, their viewpoints, their relationships, and so forth. Thus, the pastoral leader is involved in the care of persons and seeks to encourage others also to participate in the ministry of pastoral care within the community and beyond. Love is a powerful and needed force for edification. Love and support are needed for persons to risk the growth and changes needed for the fulfillment of ministry.

CHAPTER 3

EDIFICATION THROUGH PREACHING

From the beginning of the church, the ministry of the Word has been seen as essential to the upbuilding of the church. As pointed out earlier in relation to our study of Ephesians 4:11-16, the church leaders listed there are primarily ministers of the Word (those who preached and taught) although some may have had other functions as well. Some other passages studied also stressed the preaching and teaching of Paul and other early church leaders.

Several of the contemporary writers considered earlier also stressed the importance of the ministry of the Word. The pastoral leader fulfills his or her ministry of edification through preaching and teaching, as well as through administration, pastoral care, and other functions within the Christian community and in society. Preaching can be a source of energy for others,¹ a way of sharing one's vision,² and the means through which "the church is constantly built up anew and sent again into secular everyday life...and remains despite all differences, a believing and confessing community."³ "Authentic preaching of the gospel of Christ edifies the hearers and builds

¹James C. Fenhagen, Mutual Ministry (New York: Seabury, 1977) p. 103.

²John E. Biersdorf "A New Model of Ministry," in his Creating An Intentional Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) p. 29.

³Hans Küng, Why Priests? (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) p. 103.

up the church in the full range of concerns which make up God's purpose."⁴

In describing the ministry of edification, it was noted that it involves both the winning of persons to Christ and the continuing growth of those who become members of the Christian community so that they might more effectively carry out their mutual ministry and mission in the world. It embraces both the evangelistic and educational concerns and functions of the church. It is concerned about what happens within the Christian community and outside it, about the members' shared life and work and their outreach of witness and service into every aspect of their lives in society.

Preaching in the ministry of edification is as broad as the ministry itself in so far as it too includes both evangelistic and educational aspects and is concerned about affecting the hearers' total lives, within the community and as they disperse into society. Not all those who have written on the relationship of preaching and edification would agree with such broad definitions for either preaching or edification. Sometimes edification has been closely related to the educational concerns of the church, or at least with what is done within the Christian community to build up the faith and commitment of its members and to equip them to live faithfully in society. Such was the case of Alexander Campbell, one of the founders of the

⁴Ronald E. Osborn, "The Building Up of the Church," Impact No. 7 (1981) 22.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Alexander Campbell and Church Edification

This consideration of preaching in the ministry of edification has been done with special concern for its significance within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The sermon analyses to be reported in subsequent chapters have concentrated on Disciple preachers and preaching. Therefore, before we examine some biblical and historical insights about the nature of preaching, it is appropriate to examine the writing of the early Disciple leader Alexander Campbell on the subject of church edification. From the following quotations taken from an address Campbell delivered before the Kentucky Convention, held at Harrodsburg, Kentucky, September 28, 1853, and later printed in The Millennial Harbinger, we get a picture of what he meant by edification and its importance:

Church edification is . . . a transcendently important theme. For on a church's edification depend, not only its own spirituality, happiness and honor, but its usefulness to the world of mankind. The prosperity, and power, and usefulness of the Church of Jesus Christ, most essentially depend upon its vitality and healthfulness, and whatsoever promotes these, consummates those. From which we assume, that whatever most effectually promotes the vital power and healthfulness of a church, will promote its own growth, and increase its power with God and man.⁵

This statement is quite in harmony with what is said about the ministry of edification in this paper. However, Campbell

⁵Alexander Campbell, "Church Edification," Millennial Harbinger 3:10 (October 1853) 547.

differed in the scope of ministry included in the term "edification." He made a sharp distinction between edification and preaching. The former took place within the congregation and the latter was directed to persons outside the church.

Preaching the gospel and teaching the converts, are as distinct and distinguishable employments as enlisting an army and training it, or as creating a school and teaching it.⁶

He described the work of the preacher and those who were ordained to teach as:

The preacher is a mere solicitor of pupils. The field of his labor is the world--the whole world. In preaching, he does no more than to set forth the sovereign claims of the Apostle and Teacher sent from God. . . . When he succeeds in this, his appropriate mission and commission, and consummates his work by immersing them, soul, body, and spirit, into the name, the dignities, and the honors of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, his peculiar mission as an evangelist, or preacher of the gospel, expires. The church, in a given locality, is formed. . . . They select, by their suffrage, pastors . . . These elders, or seniors in the faith, are ordained to teach, instruct, and preside over all its affairs, domestic and foreign.⁷

We have seen that every church resembles a parish school, with pupils, teachers, books and tables. Edification, or building up Christians in their most holy faith and hope, is the appropriate business of the church. This is the special work and duty of its pastors and teachers. ⁸

The preacher singly aims at the conversion of his hearers, while the teacher intends the development of a passage, a doctrine, a theory; or in vindicating the tenets he has espoused, and wishes to commend to the understanding and acceptance of his people. . . . The preachers aims at producing faith in his auditory; the teacher at imparting knowledge to his disciple; the exhorter excites his auditory to action.⁹

⁶Ibid., p. 541.

⁷Ibid., pp. 542-543.

⁸Ibid., p. 544.

⁹Ibid., p. 546.

Edification, which took place in the congregation, was seen primarily as teaching. However, the "lectures" or "didactic discourses" given to the assembled church members probably resembled much of what we call preaching today. Campbell admitted that sometimes it was necessary to "declare the gospel in the church"¹⁰ but he criticized unnecessary evangelistic-type preaching to confessed Christians. Disciple scholar Granville Walker noted the following about Campbell's views:

Nevertheless, what commonly goes under the name of "preaching" was not excluded from the [pastor's or elders'] function. Grouping the [pastor or elder] with the evangelist and the exhorter, Campbell observes that whereas their functions and gifts are distinct, the order of the address of the preacher, the discourse of the teacher, and the exhortation of the exhorter is essentially the same as regards the parts and distributions of their respective compositions, or speeches.¹¹

Donald R. Jarman, in a dissertation on Campbell's preaching and teaching, indicated that even his evangelistic efforts were pragmatic and didactic sounding.

This is Campbell; reasonable, rational, well thought out, presenting the "facts" of the Gospel; anyone upon hearing will respond, as far as Campbell is concerned. The whole purpose of the sermon is to present the facts which could be understood, produce faith, and produce an immediate response and an immediate decision.¹²

When examining Campbell's teaching, Jarman noted that Campbell

studied and studied the scripture before expounding upon it

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Granville Walker, Preaching in the Thought of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: Bethany, 1954) p. 159.

¹²Donald Ray Jarman, "Kerygma and Didache in the Homiletical Theory of Alexander Campbell" (Rel. D. dissertation School of Theology at Claremont, 1970) p. 41.

to explain to his audience the full meaning and message. His topics are many and all centered upon Christ. All the time he was teaching, he was proclaiming the basic kerygma which motivated and inspired him. He used all sorts of methods; questions and answers, unusual statements and propositions were used to call the attention of his audience to the importance of his subject that he might explain and give a rational exposition of the facts.¹³

Jarman wrote in regard to one of Campbell's sermons:

In this sermon can be seen both preaching and teaching of Alexander Campbell. The kerygma is present, the affirmation of faith and the basic confirmation of the Gospel, but he also led his audience in a lesson about the law, new and old, even as the leaders of the early church might have done.¹⁴

Referring to Campbell's separation of preaching and teaching, Jarman raised this question in the light of his examination of Campbell's sermons:

Can the separation be as rigid as he thought it to be, and was he as rigidly true to this separation of preaching and teaching as he claimed to be? Does kerygma not appear in all his works? Does he not proclaim kerygma as he expounds didache? Do not these two functions of the sermon go hand in hand both in the early church, the nineteenth century church of Campbell, and the present day church? ¹⁵

The point is made here that there has been within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) a strong leaning toward the idea which has been presented of a teacher-preacher clear back to the days of Campbell who may have said that the two are separate offices, but who in his own way was a combination of the two.¹⁶

From this brief examination of Campbell's views on church edification, we find much to support this paper's emphasis on the ministry of edification and the importance of preaching within it. Even though he might not have agreed with the broadness of

¹³Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 58-59.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 47.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 78.

our definitions of edification and preaching, in practice he may have been nearer to our views than the Kentucky address suggested.

Nineteenth-century Campbell was not alone in making a distinction between preaching and teaching. In the 1960s the biblical scholar C.H. Dodd came to the conclusion that such a distinction was made in the New Testament. The next section examines Dodd's and other scholars' writings on preaching in the early church. This examination indicates that not all twentieth-century scholars agree on whether or not there was a clear distinction between preaching and teaching in the New Testament. Even if such a distinction was made then, they do not agree that preaching and teaching were separated in actual practice either within the congregation or with the unchurched, unconverted outside it.

Preaching in the Early Church

Dodd concluded that "New Testament writers drew clear distinctions between preaching and teaching. . . . Preaching . . . is the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world."¹⁷

Kerygma was not only the action of preaching, it was the message--the good news that in Christ, God has visited and redeemed his people. For Paul, it was "the proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an

¹⁷C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935, 1960) p. 7.

eschatological setting which gives significance to the facts."¹⁸ The kerygma of the Jerusalem church is found in the sermons ascribed to Peter in the Book of Acts. It "closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of 'salvation,' that is of 'the life of the Age to Come,' to those who enter the elect community."¹⁹

Teaching took place within the congregation. It expounded and defended the implications of the kerygma rather than proclaimed it. According to Dodd, most of the teaching was ethical instruction, but it also included apologetics and exposition of theological doctrine. Exhortation (paraklesis or homilia) was "informal discussion of various aspects of Christian life and thought, addressed to a congregation already established in the faith."²⁰

Dodd's views were widely accepted at one time. However, critics have arisen, and other biblical scholars have given other interpretations regarding the relationship of preaching and teaching in the early church. Educator Robert C. Worley analyzed and organized much of this criticism and biblical scholarship. He summed up this analysis:

In the more recent comments on Dodd's original ideas, there is less conviction that the content of preaching and the content of teaching are so distinctive that they can be separated into their own unique forms. There are two major ideas which have come from the critical studies of Dodd's theory. New Testament scholars gravitate toward one or the other of these ideas. The first group of scholars holds to the idea that no fundamental distinctions can be made between the content of preaching and the content of teaching. If

¹⁸Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 23.

²⁰Ibid., p. 8.

distinctions are to be made, these will be in terms of the style of delivery or the form of the material, but the basic content is the same. The second group suggests that differences can be made between types of content, but these are inseparable in their presentation. The materials are so woven together in their necessary relationships that it is mistaken and inaccurate to separate them.²¹

A recent scholarly analysis has been presented by James I. H. McDonald. In studying the forms of communication in the New Testament, McDonald admitted that there was a distinction between preaching and teaching, but

that the distinction lies in the informality of the situation and the posture of the teacher rather than in the substance of the message. . . . Further, preaching and teaching are properly regarded as being broadly complementary and as denoting the whole process of communicating the appropriate message. This operates equally for the ministry of Jesus . . . and the apostolic mission. . . . The extent to which the terms overlap and integrate makes it difficult to separate them except in general terms.²²

Kerygma and didache can still be used as complementary terms to denote the central complex of Christian utterance but because of their peculiar interrelatedness they cannot provide a basis for a proper operational analysis of Christian communication. It is not enough to attempt to identify given material formally as kerygma or didache, for it might have both kerygmatic or didactic characteristics to a greater or lesser degree and at the same time possess other features which signify its nature and intention in a more useful way.²³

McDonald went on to identify the following categories of forms or structures in the New Testament: Propheteia, which had to do with "the reception and articulation of revelation,"²⁴ within the community in spirit-empowered, estatic-type

²¹Robert C. Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) p. 83.

²²James I. H. McDonald, Kerygma and Didache (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 6.

²³Ibid., p. 7.

²⁴Ibid., p. 10.

experiences; paraclesis which was "exhortatory preaching at home in liturgical or community circles and dependent upon midrashic tradition,"²⁵ and which might be the foundation of the church's homiletic tradition; paraenesis and catechesis which were didactic structures dealing with ethical teaching and basic instruction in the content of the faith; and paradosis which was the transmitting and interpretation of the church's religious tradition, originating with Jesus (but including Jewish traditions and the apostolic witness) and which provided the basis for the other forms of communication.

From his study of the New Testament, McDonald concluded that both kerygma and didache are encompassed in the hermeneutical task of the church:

In the last analysis all types of Christian communication - dependent as they are on paradosis - share with it the primary concern of transmitting Christ and the understanding of life which is given in him, and of summoning man to make the appropriate response of trust and commitment.²⁶

Christian utterance tends to be both kerygmatic and didactic. Nor is one necessarily prior to the other.²⁷

Scholars may not agree on the nature and relationship of the various aspects of biblical communication, but most seem to indicate that they cannot be neatly separated into Dodd's isolated categories separating preaching and teaching. The early preaching and teaching were interrelated, and both included kerygmatic and didactic characteristics as appropriate to the particular situation, audience and form of communication.

²⁵Ibid., p. 11.

²⁶Ibid., p. 125.

²⁷Ibid., p. 127.

Preaching Through the Centuries

A similar report on the views of Dodd, Worley, and McDonald was given in a paper entitled, "When Preachers Taught (Or Did They?)," I prepared for a class on "Proclamation in Church History."²⁸ In that paper seventy-two sermons, covering almost the entire span of church history from the second century through the twentieth, were analyzed in relation to their kerygmatic and didactic characteristics.

For the purpose of establishing some basic understandings to use in that analysis, the following distinctions were made:

Preaching as primarily proclamation - The proclamation is basically of the saving action of God, especially through Jesus Christ, and usually is accompanied by a call to decision--to believe in Christ as Lord and Savior, for repentance and conversion, etc., This type of preaching is primarily directed to the non-Christian, the non-churched. It also might be directed to "unregenerated," nominal church members (especially in cases in which membership in a state church virtually means everyone).

Preaching as primarily didactic - Such preaching may include exposition of scripture, interpretation of beliefs and sacred traditions, development of theological ideas and images, ethical exhortation, implications of the faith for daily living and lives of service, and other concerns which grow out of the proclamation of the gospel (which is more or less assumed in the sermon). This preaching is directed to persons in the church who are already confessed Christians or at least have made an initial act of intention toward becoming church members. The purpose may be to bring the hearers to a fuller knowledge of scripture or doctrine, to deepen commitment and renew their faith, to persuade them to action--such as works of service, witness, worship--or to change attitudes or ethical behavior in light of their faith.

²⁸Natalie Hodgson, "When Preachers Taught (Or Did They?)," prepared for the class, "Proclamation in Church History" taught by Ronald E. Osborn, School of Theology at Claremont, 1981.

Preaching that is a combination of proclamation and didactic
 - Much preaching may include some combination of the above two types. Some sermons may be primarily of one type but include some aspects of the other type: for instance, proclamation of a belief in God with some interpretation regarding prayer or ethical behavior which bases its approach on certain beliefs about God.²⁹

The sermon analysis dealt mainly with content as it reflected the different types of preaching. However, some differences in style were also detected. Augustine in his On Christian Doctrine indicated that the plain style of rhetoric is more appropriate for teaching, and the grand style for persuasion. However, the good, eloquent church orator should use all three of the types he described--plain, middle (to please), and grand--in order to teach, delight, and move. A sermon might include all three styles.

The seventy-two sermons analyzed were placed on a continuum based on the above three types of preaching. "Proclamation to convert" was on the extreme left of the continuum. "Strictly didactic" was on the right extreme. As sermons were deemed to be "more and more essentially proclamation to convert," they were placed farther on the left of center. As sermons were judged to be "more and more essentially didactic," they were placed farther to the right. Sermons placed nearer the center were considered to be "some combination of proclamation and didactic preaching."

The judgments made in placing the sermons on the

²⁹Ibid., p. 11 and 12.

continuum were made subjectively so that someone else reading the same sermons might have made other judgments. The results of this analysis indicated that 24 or one-third of the sermons were placed to the left of center, meaning that they were primarily proclamatory in nature, although those nearer the center also had some didactic qualities to a greater or lesser degree. Thirty-four or almost one-half of the sermons were located to the right of center, meaning that they were primarily didactic in nature, with those nearer the center having a varying amount of proclamation included, either explicitly or implicitly. Fourteen or about one-fifth were judged combinations to the degree that they were placed in the center of the continuum, meaning that they had a fair balance of proclamation and didactic ingredients.

This subjective analysis of sermons given throughout the centuries supported the thesis that preaching in the Christian church has included both proclamation of the good news of Christ and teaching to promote growth in knowledge and understanding, commitment, and ability to live a life of loving service in the light of that good news. Preaching and teaching are not necessarily separate and isolated functions. Depending on what is needed for particular situations and audiences, preachers may combine kerygma and didache in various ways, sometimes emphasizing one aspect, sometimes the other. (The same might be said for teachers.)

Professor of preaching, DeWitte Holland, stated that

the proclamation (the kerygma) and the teaching (sometimes called the didache), markedly different from each other, are both a part of the preaching function of the church; both are

are suitable, but under different conditions. The distinction is content--not mode of delivery, place, or time of communication.³⁰

The unevangelized need something more than didache: the evangelized need more than kerygma. Certainly God honors each of these types of preaching.³¹

The content and form of a sermon should be appropriate to the preaching situation, taking into consideration the needs of the audience, the sermon's main purpose, the particular occasion, and the general conditions existing in the church and society. To serve as an effective tool within the ministry of edification, preaching must be directed to particular persons in a particular situation, yet in the general context of the universal church and its message of good news for all people.

Some Criticisms of Preaching

Alexander Campbell, who was quoted earlier, sharply criticized much of the preaching of the mid-1800s for its inappropriateness within established congregations. Kerygmatic sermons to win converts were too often given when didactic ones might have been more appropriate to the needs of the church members. As a proponent of believer's baptism, Campbell was critical of the "Pedobaptist" churches who had to keep preaching the gospel to their members to convert them. However, he also criticized the Baptists who, while having different views of

³⁰DeWitte T. Holland, The Preaching Tradition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980) p. 11.

³¹Ibid., p. 113.

church membership than the "Pedobaptists" had, copied the others' evangelistic style and themes in preaching to their already converted members. Hence these churches were "more frequently preaching regeneration and conversion to their hearers, than building them up in their most holy faith."³²

Disciple orators did not go unscathed by Campbell's criticism when they too continued to preach evangelistic sermons "as if their communities were still to be taught the rudimental elements of the Christian faith."³³ Since the members of the Disciple congregations were assumed to be confessed, baptized Christians, they did not need to be evangelized, but rather they needed to be taught through didactic sermons or discourses which enhanced their growing knowledge of the faith. Evangelistic preaching was appropriate when addressing the unchurched and unconverted, but church members needed something different.

We preach Jesus the Christ, to convert the world. We baptize into his death, burial, and resurrection, to bring into the church. We then teach Christ to edify and perfect the church. For the perfection of the church, the doctrine of Christ is developed and inculcated.³⁴

Most Disciple churches that I know today would not earn Campbell's criticism, at least not in that regard. Many perhaps might deserve more the critical remarks of theologian Richard A. Jensen who labeled ninety percent of the preaching he had heard as being didactic preaching. This preaching was essentially "the

³²Campbell, p. 545.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 550.

communication of ideas, the making of points, the exchange of information, etc."³⁵ One big problem is that this type of preaching can become very dull and uninspiring.

Another problem with some didactic preaching is that it can become moralistic and judgmental, without much good news for the hearers. To guard against this tendency, Lutheran preacher Harry Huxhold emphasized the importance of including proclamation with such preaching. (In other words, kerygmatic characteristics need to be combined with the didactic.) For Huxhold, the "function of preaching . . . is to illustrate, enhance, encourage faith or truth in the gracious God who frees us to live in the freedom of His love for the sake of our neighbors."³⁶

When K. Morgan Edwards was installed as the Gerald Kennedy Professor of Preaching at the School of Theology at Claremont, his Convocation address was entitled "Grace: The Dominant Note in Preaching." In it, he too warned against emphasis on judgmental preaching.

Both grace and judgment need to be presented in every sermon. When we try to preach one without the other the gospel is distorted. When we hold out God's restoration without holding up his demands we do not preach grace. We substitute sentiment. When we invite our listeners to accept God's love without making plain the demands of holiness we do not lead men to the living God. Instead we send them off in a vain search for an over-permissive celestial psychotherapist. If our preaching is to lead men into an encounter with God we will include both grace and judgment in every sermon.

When it comes to the matter of the proper proportion

³⁵Richard A. Jensen, Telling the Story (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980) p. 11.

³⁶Harry N. Huxhold, "On Homiletical Method," Encounter 37:1 (Winter 1976) 74.

between grace and judgment the overwhelming emphasis must be on grace.³⁷

Osborn has noted that as a prophet for God, the apostolic minister is charged "to declare the Word with faithfulness. His goal is to convince, not to condemn, to convict, not to consign to perdition. . . . [He has] the responsibility of declaring the reign of god in every human situation."³⁸

In addition to this prophetic responsibility of affirming the reign of God and calling people to "submit their lives to the perfect demands of the kingdom,"³⁹ the minister is a "herald" within the Christian community and beyond its limits.

He performs a kerygmatic task, and his every proclamation should, in the last analysis, derive its content from the gospel of God. A preacher obviously increases the effectiveness of his sermon when he addresses it to a particular problem which perplexes his hearers as they seek to live out their Christian calling, but only if he chooses a problem of man in the world. The minister who constantly nags his people about church attendance, the congregational budget, and such matters, preaches not gospel but law, addresses himself not to their problems but to his own.⁴⁰

Classical Protestant preaching majored on the biblical witness; through the greatest of the pulpit voices it engaged men's hearts and wills in the living present and changed lives and destiny. But a great many run-of-the-mine sermons never got out of the wilderness of Judea and churchgoers readily confused preaching with ancient history. The topical preachers of the nineteenth century popularized the vogue of contemporaneity, and Fosdick perfected the problem-solving sermon, but many of their followers tend to minimize the good

³⁷K. Morgan Edwards, "Grace: the Dominant Note in Preaching" (1965) p. 3.

³⁸Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany, 1967) p. 106.

³⁹Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁰Ibid.

news. A staggering proportion of preaching uses up its time in stale and gratuitous rehearsal of the world's current problems. . . . Perhaps we should welcome any effort to make preaching fresh and interesting, but our times require more than description of our problems, whether breezy or horrendous. [People] still need the gospel.⁴¹

Preaching has come under attack for what it has tended to emphasize and for what it has slighted, as well as for its form and style. Criticism has come from both the pews and the pulpit itself. Earlier in this paper, the ministry of the Word has been recognized as an essential element in the edification of the church. From the church's beginning, preaching has played an important role in the upbuilding of the church and in the equipping of its people for their work of service in the world. Therefore, persons involved in the ministry of edification should take seriously these words of Fred B. Craddock, Disciple professor of New Testament and preaching:

We are all aware that in countless courts of opinion the verdict on preaching has been rendered and the sentence passed. . . . Increasingly, the brows that frown upon the pulpit are not only intelligent, but often theologically informed, and quite often deeply concerned about the Christian mission. Their judgments about preaching cannot be regarded as reflections of a general disinterest in religion, not dismissed as the usual criticisms hurled at the familiar caricature in the pulpit, droning away in stained-glass tones with pretended convictions about matters uninteresting, unimportant, and untrue. Some of these men have themselves been preachers in the churches.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., p. 108.

⁴²Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) p. 1 and 2.

Some "Stirrings of New Life for Preaching"

In spite of the criticism often leveled at much of the preaching heard in churches, Craddock is hopeful that there are "stirrings of new life for preaching."⁴³ Some of the current attempts to bring about this new life may well enhance the role of preaching in the ministry of edification. This may be true especially of those that stress the need to bridge the gap between the pulpit and pew, to draw the hearers into the preaching event, to enable them to be more than passive listeners as they become "participants" in what is being said and heard. Such preaching is quite in harmony with the characteristics of the ministry of edification developed in this paper, such as its stress on mutuality, participation, and a ministerial style that is enabling, rather than autocratic and authoritarian.

"Inductive preaching" as developed by Craddock turns the traditional, authoritarian sermon upside down. The common deductive-type sermon is developed by

stating the thesis, breaking it down into points or sub-theses, explaining and illustrating these points and applying them to the particular situations of the hearers.⁴⁴

In induction, thought moves from the particulars of experience that have a familiar ring in the listener's ear to a general truth or conclusion.⁴⁵

Some of the advantages and characteristics of inductive preaching according to Craddock are lifted up in the following

⁴³Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 57.

brief quotations. (This is not the place to provide an extensive discussion of this preaching style.)

One reason for stressing inductive preaching is that one need not often make the applications of the conclusion to the lives of his hearers. If they have made the trip, then it is their conclusion, and the implication for their own situations is not only clear but personally inescapable. . . . For this reason, the inductively moving sermon is more descriptive than hortatory, more marked by the affirmative than the imperative, with the realization, of course, that the strongest of all imperatives is a clear affirmative that has been embraced.⁴⁶

Craddock stressed two essentials of this type of preaching:

First, particular concrete experiences are ingredient to the sermon. . . . On the basis of these concrete thoughts and events, by analogy and by the listener's identification with what he hears, conclusions are reached, new perspectives are gained, decisions made.

The second matter thus far stressed as fundamental to induction is movement of material that respects the hearer as not only capable of but deserving the right to participate in that movement and arrive at a conclusion that is his own, not just the speaker's.⁴⁷

The sermon is left open-ended so that the listener is allowed to complete it as he or she finds personal meaning and application. "The participating of the hearer is essential, not just in the post-benediction implementation but in the completion of the thought, movement and decision-making within the sermon itself."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 57-58.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 61-62.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 64.

The aim of inductive preaching is to enable the hearer to make his or her own faith decision by reflecting on his or her life "in a new way, a way that is provided by the Gospel. If the sermon evokes this reflection, all the while bringing it into the presence of God, judgment and promise become actual doors open to the listener."⁴⁹

Jensen proposes "story preaching"⁵⁰ as one possible solution to his criticism of didactic sermons referred to earlier. Whereas didactic sermons are primarily cognitive in approach to import knowledge and understanding, story sermons appeal also to the intuitive and affective aspects of one's being. Rather than teaching what people ought to know, a story sermon helps them recognize and acknowledge who they are (and can become) in the light of the gospel communicated through the story. Thus, they come to know that the good news of Jesus Christ embraces their lives, their personal stories, within the eternal Story.

Jensen lists six characteristics of story preaching:

1. The biblical text is treated as a particular configuration of literary form (how the message is communicated) and content (what the message is) which has serious implications for our contemporary recasting of the text. . . . The literary form of the text, its images, symbols and metaphors, cannot be separated from the kerygma of the text.⁵¹
2. The story is the preaching itself. . . . It can create an arena in the imagination wherein the listener is caught up and transformed or shocked or good-newsed or whatever [without further elaborations by the preacher.]⁵²

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁰Jensen, p. 114.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 126-127.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 129, 134.

3. The aim of the sermon is the participation and involvement of the listener in the gospel story.⁵³

4. Stories function in the indirect mode of communication. . . . Indirect communication comes at us "slant." It catches us by surprise . . . conventional wisdom falls. New wisdom that is old foolishness, that is, the gospel, breaks through. That at least is the hope.⁵⁴

5. Story preaching is open-ended.⁵⁵

6. Faith is evoked by the eucatastrophic experience. . . . In a story that is full of the gospel, full of "good turns," full of eucatastrophe, I recognize and acknowledge that . . . "That's me in the story. It's my life that has been (good) turned around."⁵⁶

Craddock and Jensen are representative of a new approach to preaching which may communicate the gospel to a generation of people who have heard so much preaching and teaching that they have ceased to hear the fundamental message. When the direct approach is thus "turned off," then there is still hope that the people will receive the good news by "overhearing"⁵⁷ it through this indirect, inductive, participatory style of preaching.

Some who see preaching as "shared story" point to this new approach as doing "balanced justice to all four basic components of preaching: the preacher, the listener, the

⁵³Ibid., p. 135.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 139, 143-144.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 144.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 147-148.

⁵⁷Fred B. Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978)

ecclesiastical and social context, and the message."⁵⁸ In summary, they state that

Preaching as shared story is the event in which our particular stories are caught up into The Story to be judged, redeemed, and enlarged in purpose.⁵⁹

The Aim of Preaching for Edification

The intent of preaching is conviction: to evoke faith in the spiritual reality professed by the believing community, to bring a recognition and repudiation of wrong. Most persons who listen to the preacher already believe, at least to a degree; with regard to them the purpose is confirmation and intensification of the faith they already have. Christian exhortation (paraklesis) from the beginning has undertaken to strengthen the commitment of the faithful.⁶⁰

These words of Osborn assist us in the search for a statement of objective for preaching within the ministry of edification. Another statement helpful in this regard was originally adopted as the objective of Christian Education by a number of denominations in the 1960s. It suggests an appropriate objective for preaching in that it catches up both the proclamation and didactic aspects which have been a part of Christian preaching through the centuries, lifts up both the hearers' awareness-response to the gospel and their continued growth in faith and loving action, emphasizes both the biblical message and its implications for the hearers life today, and

⁵⁸Edmund A. Steimle, Morris J. Niedenthal and Charles L. Rice, Preaching the Story (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) pp. 11-12.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁰Ronald E. Osborn, "A Functional Definition of Preaching: A Tool for Historical Investigation and Homiletical Criticism" Encounter, 37:1 (Winter, 1976) 68.

recognizes their common discipleship (ministry of edification) in the world. It connects The Story and the people's stories.

The objective . . . is that all persons be aware of God through his self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ, and that they respond in faith and love--to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, grow as sons [and daughters] of God rooted in the Christian community, live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and abide in the Christian hope.⁶¹

Analysis of Selected Sermons

The following four chapters summarize the analysis of a selected number of sermons given by four Disciples of Christ preachers during the last three decades (early 1950s to early 1980s). These sermons were preached in Disciples of Christ congregations within the Pacific Southwest Region. These four Disciples preachers were Dennis B. Savage, minister of the Temple City Christian Church and later of the First Christian Church of Whittier during this period; Wesley P. Ford, then minister of the Central/First Christian Church of Pasadena; Edwin C. Linberg, minister of the Gateway Christian Church in Los Angeles and later of the Temple City Christian Church; and Kring Allen, then minister of the McCarty Memorial Christian Church in Los Angeles.

The analyses of the sermons primarily focus on four categories:

1. Purpose. What expectations/desired results were

⁶¹A Design for Teaching-Learning (St. Louis: Bethany, 1967) p. 8.

evident (given explicitly or implied) in the sermon? How did the preacher hope to affect the hearers: convert them or renew their faith, change their thinking or behavior, challenge them to action, inform them about their faith and/or the society in which they lived, comfort and strengthen them, equip them for witness and service in the world, and so forth?

2. Audience/Congregational Context. Who was the primary audience to which the sermon was directed? Was the preacher speaking to the congregation as a corporate body or as a gathering of individuals; was the preacher seeking to edify or build up the congregation as a whole or the individual members in their personal lives? Were the hearers assumed to be confessing, committed Christians or unchurched persons in need of conversion? What other assumptions about the audience seemed to have been in the mind of the one giving the sermon?

3. Content. What was the main content thrusts of the sermon? What was being proclaimed and/or taught? How was the sermon being used to build up the congregation or individual; what ideas, beliefs, situations, implications, and so forth were emphasized?

4. Broad Contextual Relationships. How did the preacher speak out of and to the historical/cultural/church situation of the hearers? How did the sermon reflect what was happening in the region and beyond in the nation and world at that time? How did the preacher seek to relate the hearers to the current situation/events and possible implications for their work of

service and witness as concerned Christians? (To give concreteness to the analysis in this category, research was made concerning happenings in the Pacific Southwest Region in the 1960s and 1970s. These findings are provided in the Appendix.)

The analysis does not concentrate on such factors as sermonic style, use of the the Bible, theological positions, and so forth except as these affect or otherwise are related to the above mentioned categories or seemed to play a significant role in the preacher's ministry of edification.

The sermons of all four preachers (Savage, Ford, Linberg, and Allen) contribute significantly in their own ways to our analysis in all four above categories. However, those of each preacher seem to make a special contribution in one category or another. For instance, Dennis Savage's teaching style and emphasis on putting one's sermonic purpose in writing are especially helpful in relation to the first category, Purpose. Therefore, the first of the next four chapters reports on his sermons. Wesley Ford gives special attention to the needs of his Audience, and therefore he is reported secondly. Edwin Linberg's use of the Bible and concern for thematic balance seem to speak especially to the third category on Content. Kring Allen's prophetic approach to the social/racial situation during his ministry provides an excellent examination of how a preacher might treat Broad Contextual Relationships, category four.

CHAPTER 4

DENNIS B. SAVAGE: PURPOSEFUL TEACHER-PREACHER

Thirty-seven sermons were read and analyzed as the basis for the following statements concerning the preaching of Dennis B. Savage at the First Christian Church in Whittier, California. A conversation with Savage supplemented this analysis.

Savage was minister of the Whittier First Christian Church for fourteen years, resigning that position in the fall of 1981. Prior to coming to Whittier, he was minister of the Temple City Christian Church. He is well-known in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a writer, educator, regional leader, and world traveler. One of his avocations is dramatics.

A Teaching-Preaching Style

Savage identifies himself as a "teaching preacher," and my analysis substantiates this claim. Although most of the sermons read have distinctive kerygmatic characteristics and foundations, they are primarily didactic in form and substance. The good news is often proclaimed, combined with emphasis on some particular implications for the hearers' lives in the church and daily in society. The biblical message is presented and interpreted in ways designed to make it understandable and vital for life in the twentieth century.

An interesting sermon on worship demonstrates Savage's concern for teaching through his sermons. Entitled, "An Audience

With God" (given September 16, 1979), it is called a "scatter sermon." It begins before the Call to Worship and continues throughout the worship service, explaining each part of the service, to the benediction. This sermon is perhaps the most obvious teaching sermon of those read. In it, Savage gives some of his views on preaching:

To preach--means "to proclaim," "to announce," "to declare,"--to be a herald for God. When I step into this pulpit, I have tried to prepare myself and surrender my life, so God's message may come forth through me.

To do this, I read constantly--books, magazines, newspapers. I clip articles and file them under topics for future use. I mark pages (in books that belong to me!) and write the topic at the top of the page. I spend hours reading the Bible and Bible study books--seeking to understand better the Will of God, the Truth of God, for our lives today.

When I begin to write a sermon, I enter into prayer and ask God to direct me, to work through me. Then I sit in silent meditation. Sometimes his directions are loud and clear. Sometimes I must struggle--writing and rewriting. I spend a minimum of 7 hours and up to 30 hours preparing a sermon.

When we gather in worship--for our Audience with God--I rejoice and am encouraged by you who have responded to God's invitation. When we pray, I ask God to speak through me. The preacher is the spokesman for God. He is "set aside"--ordained after years of training and earnest preparation.

In the above quote, Savage emphasizes the reading he does in preparation for preaching. In our conversation, he also commented on the importance of reading literature, biographies, and novels. In reading his sermons, I find that he draws many illustrations from religious publications, his personal experiences as a pastor and world traveler, discoveries and developments in the scientific world, and current world events.

The Bible is often read--sometimes a few verses here and there throughout a sermon--to illustrate points and ideas.

In general, his sermons follow this pattern:

1. Statement of purpose. (More will be said about this feature later in this chapter.)

2. Introduction. Each sermon begins with an attention-getter. Sometimes it is a dramatic reading, involving persons from the congregation. Sometimes it is a bit of familiar poetry. Sometimes pertinent questions are asked, either for the hearers to think about or even to respond to through the raising of hands (such as in answer to questions about job-status and family background in "From Top to Bottom and All Around," a sermon given on World Communion Sunday, October 7, 1979).

Sometimes objects are used, such as a handful of stones for the sermon "The Church of 'Living Stones'" (June 1, 1980) and the common symbols held up to begin the sermon "The Cross Reminds Me" (March 8, 1981). For the Lenten sermon, "Servants of the Cross" (April 5, 1981), slides taken at the Oberammergau Passion Play are shown. In the sermon "Chain Reactions" (April 27, 1980) the audience is requested to stand and pair off for an experiment to show the influence people have on each other.

Whatever is done, the primary purpose seems to be to help the hearers realize that what is about to be said relates to the here and now, to common experiences in their lives or in the lives of some people today.

3. The main body of the sermon. The sermons are divided

into several points, developing different aspects of the theme. These points may or may not build upon each other. They may provide different ways of looking at a topic, a series of illustrations or examples of various persons' experiences or ideas, a comparison of biblical and modern views or practices, background information and some implications for the hearers' lives, and so forth. The sermons often build in intensity to a climax in which certain ideas or actions are emphasized with particular force and clarity.

4. The invitation. The issuing of the invitation for persons to make their confession of faith or to transfer their membership from another church is a common practice in congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Savage includes this invitation in the development of the sermon, actually planning what to say in order to tie it into what he has been saying in the main body of the sermon. Often, he addresses not only the potential new church members, but the entire congregation with a challenge for the renewal of faith and recommitment to Christ and the church.

5. The act of declaration. Near the close of the worship service, in a portion of the service entitled "The Call to Witness," Savage gives a summary statement as "The Act of Declaration." Often this is a list of specific ideas to remember and/or actions to be taken during the coming week. Sometimes he reads a passage of scripture or a quotation from literature which catches up the main theme of the sermon. A few of the sermons

read include the reminder of a related church event, such as the "Planning Advance" meeting to be held on Sunday afternoon following the sermon "The Church of 'Living Stone.'"

Some examples of what is included in The Act of Declaration may be seen in the following:

--With sermon, "We Live in Two Cities" (February 4, 1973)

1. Read Galatians this week.
2. Just sit and meditate on God's Spirit in you, in others, and in the universe.
3. Seek to share your faith with another person and share deeply.

--With sermon, "For Tired Do-Gooders" (April 29, 1973)

We are accountable to God how we spend our lives. I pray we will give them generously serving the needs of others. This is to be IN Christ!

--With sermon, "God and Your Health" (January 14, 1979)

1. Look at yourself truthfully about your stresses and worries, problems, and attitudes. Realize that Christ can help you be more free, but,
2. Grow in Faith, in Hope or attitude, and in Discipline--improving your diet, exercise, and thoughts--and avoid polluting your body, mind, and spirit.
3. Pray daily--not what you want--but to be in tune with God.
4. May you have Good Health! God's Haleness and Heartiness.

--With sermon, "Between the Rock and the Hard Place" (July 6, 1980 - Independence Sunday). The congregation read in unison St. Francis prayer, beginning "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..."

Keeping the Purpose in Mind

Savage provides an excellent example of a preacher's concern for the purpose or desired results of a sermon, the first category listed in the previous chapter for this sermon analysis. In our conversation, he stressed the importance of being able to state a sermon's purpose in a short sentence or statement and

then to keep it in mind in the sermon's development and delivery.

The purpose for each of Savage's sermons is typed at the top of the first page. Sometimes it is a sentence; at other times merely several connected phrases. Sometimes it is a statement of the basic theme, belief, or concern to be developed; at other times it expresses the result desired--a change in attitude, possible actions, the renewal of faith and commitment, new understandings, or other implications of the basic thrust of the sermon.

The Act of Declaration at the end of the service provides him another opportunity to focus on this purpose in a brief statement or series of suggestions which the hearers might take with them. The purpose of the sermon shapes the entire service--the scripture read, the hymns, the various elements of the liturgy--as well as the sermon and Savage's declarative remarks before the benediction.

Besides the stated purpose at the beginning of each sermon, the development of the sermon itself usually reveals some desired outcomes which, although related to the stated purpose, are not specifically spelled out in it. They are the specific ways the speaker seems to be trying to influence the hearers' by imparting information, suggesting possible actions and attitudes, emphasizing certain ideas and examples, and so forth.

The following are some of the expectations/desired results (stated or unstated) evident in the sermons analyzed:

-To strengthen commitment to God in Christ and to a life of witness and service. This is probably the principal aim of

Savage's sermons. In sermon after sermon, it is a stated and unstated purpose. He acknowledges this in the sermon "Lord, Who?" (Pentecost, June 10, 1981). The stated purpose is "To inspire deepened commitment to . . . and increased understanding of . . . Jesus Christ as Lord," which he relates to the first goal of the congregation's five-year plan: "A membership which witnesses to its total commitment to Jesus Christ in in the church and in daily life."

-To renew faith, to grow spiritually, to trust God, to grow as Christ's disciples. This objective may be stated or implied in various ways, but it is the concern of many of the sermons. Sometimes it means the beginnings of faith or of a new understanding of it.

-To learn more about God, to grow in knowledge about. . . This phrase might be finished in many ways: knowledge about . . the Holy Spirit, baptism, worship, a particular book of the Bible, the needs of the world, how to serve and so forth. As a teaching preacher, Savage uses his sermons to help the hearers grow in knowledge about many aspects of their faith and its implications for life in the church and in their daily lives.

-To accept the challenge to. . . . Here again the phrase may be completed in many ways: challenge to . . . live as Christ's servants, to be change agents, to let God work through one's life, to care enough to work for a changed world, to dare, to risk, to work for peace, to reject war as a "solution," to study and grow, to build together for a stronger church.

-To act on one's faith and commitment, to serve, to witness, to share one's faith, to proclaim the Good News. . . . and so forth. The implications emphasized in sermons often call for some response. It may be in giving to and helping persons in need, supporting the church budget and outreach mission, or assuming leadership in the church. It may mean changing or strengthening one's daily attempts to live as a Christian (which may mean living differently than many persons in this success-oriented, materialistic, military-minded culture). For individuals the desired actions may affect their interpersonal relationships. For the corporate body, it may mean openness to all persons, becoming a more loving community, planning and working to meet future needs, and being concerned about the whole church.

-To grow in awareness of interrelatedness of all creation, to develop a global consciousness, to become more caring and compassionate, and so forth. The sermons are designed to affect attitudes, as well as actions, recognizing the attitudes can be the basis and motivation for future actions.

-To gain skills. Attempts are made to use some sermons to equip the hearers for tasks and responsibilities. For instance instructions are given concerning skills in communication and for being of help to persons with problems. In the sermon "Marriage Is Becoming" (June 22, 1980 - Wedding Renewal Sunday), one section suggests "tools for tuning up a marriage."

It is impossible to list all the ways the sermons are used to affect a change or call for a response in the lives of the hearers, but perhaps the above list suggests the range of possibilities revealed in the analyzed sermons.

Awareness of Audience

The second category for analysis raises the questions concerning the hearers to whom the preacher directs his or her words.

Sometimes the sermons analyzed seem to be primarily directed to the corporate body to affect the life and work of the Christian community. One such sermon is the "scattered sermon" mentioned earlier which is designed to teach the congregation through its experience of corporate worship. Others include World Communion Sunday sermons that stress the oneness and worldwide, inclusive nature of the church; sermons addressing the leaders of the church and those attending the Planning Advance meetings; and the sermon "All Kinds of 'Dishes'" given on the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the Whittier church (January 20, 1980).

Almost half of the sermons used for this study seem to be directed primarily to the individual Christians gathered for worship. They are recognized as being a part of the corporate body, but the main thrusts of the sermons are designed to affect the hearers' personal lives of faith and actions as they scatter into society. A clear example of this characteristic is seen in "Marriage Is Becoming" which concludes with a ceremony for the

renewing of marriage vows.

In many other sermons, no such distinction seems to be anticipated between possible corporate and individual reactions to what is said. The speaker addresses the hearers' total life as church members, including experiences of working together as a group/church and of scattering to act alone in society. What is said in the sermon has implications for the upbuilding of the congregation as a whole and the individuals within it. Possible examples might be seen in the stewardship sermon "For Tired Do-Gooders" (April 30, 1973), "Gift for the 80s" (January 6, 1980) given in connection with the commissioning of a couple as missionaries to Zaire, the Week of Compassion sermons which stress giving to the church's special offering and helping the needy in other ways as well, and the Easter sermon "The Empty Cross" (April 19, 1981). The latter has as its stated purpose "Christ Lives! - in us - in His Body - The Church - in and around the world" and includes the highlighting of the lives of five individuals (as examples of the ways members of the Whittier church are witnesses to the living Christ working in and through them).

Most of the sermons read seem to assume that most of the hearers are members of the church and need to be helped to grow in their understanding of their faith and its implications for their lives. However, in issuing "the invitation," the preacher acknowledges that there might be those in the congregation who have not made their confession of faith in Jesus Christ and joined the church. In including this invitation as an integral

part of each sermon, Savage seems to be making a conscious effort to keep this possibility in mind.

One of the sermons, "Two Funnels and the Fulness of God" (October 21, 1979), is especially addressed to new members and prospective members. Mindful that many in the congregation are familiar with much of the sermon's content (concerning Savage's theology about the fulness of God), he admonishes them to listen anyway since "repetition and review are steps to learning."

Major Themes for the Year

In discussing sermon content with Savage, he gave the following general outline of the themes developed through a typical year:

January: Themes centering on God--God's nature, love, creativity, and so forth. Two sermons that illustrate this are "The Heaven's Are Telling!" and "God and Your Health."

February: Often a mixture of themes, but usually including social and world concerns in connection with Week of Compassion Sunday and Race Relations Sunday. This survey includes three sermons for Week of Compassion Sundays, stressing Christian responses to the needs of the world. Another February sermon, "We live in Two Cities," has as its purpose "To live IN the world we must hold strong faith in God constantly."

March - April: Lenten-Easter emphases (centering on Christ), plus baptism, evangelism, the new person in Christ, growing as Christ's servants/disciples, stewardship, and related

themes. The sermons used in this study fit well into this portion of the outline, since they include three Lenten sermons, two Easter sermons, and others dealing with stewardship, evangelism, and baptism.

May - June: Themes related to church organization, planning, dedication of officers, stewardship, service and mission; marriage and family; and the special days, Pentecost and Memorial Day (perhaps dealing generally with peace and death). Sermons falling into this time period are "Lord, Who?" a Pentecost sermon on a theological understanding of Jesus Christ as Lord; "Marriage Is Becoming" on Wedding Renewal Sunday; "The Church of 'Living Stones'" on Planning Advance; and "The Church of My Dreams" to challenge the new officers being dedicated that Sunday.

July - August: General topics, such as study of the Psalms and other books of the Bible; "human concerns" of loneliness, anger, discouragement, self-esteem, individuality, growth and change, fears, common half-truths, and so forth; Christian citizenship, war-peace, freedom, and other themes appropriate for the Sunday nearest to the Fourth of July. The sermons studied reflect this diversity.

September: Themes related to the stepping up of church activities, Christian education, witness and service. For instance, the sermon "Meanwhile--Back on Earth" proposes "to encourage and help us with our serving in Christ under guidance of the Holy Spirit." The sermon on worship mentioned earlier was

given in September.

October: Themes focusing on World Communion Sunday, world order, and the Reformation. Two October sermons were selected because of the emphasis Savage places on World Communion Sunday. The other two October sermons deal with theological questions about the Holy Spirit and the nature of God as revealed in the Bible.

November: Themes related to Thanksgiving, biblical expository sermons, and general concerns. "Growth in Thanks Giving" combines the Thanksgiving theme with Bible study.

December: Advent-Christmas. Savage indicates that the Advent-Christmas season is a "great" opportunity for preaching and other celebrative activities in the church. Unfortunately, through an oversight, no sermons from this season are included in this study.

In general, the sermons studied support this general outline of themes for a balanced offering of emphases over a year's time.

A General Global Consciousness

In our conversation, Savage emphasized the need to help the congregation develop a global consciousness. This concern is reflected in the sermons studied. Over two-thirds of the sermons encourage the hearers to relate their faith to the larger world around them. Whereas only a few sermons make concern for conditions in the world and society a major thrust, the majority

of sermons contain some reminders of what is taking place beyond the congregation and the generally middle-class experiences of the members. Some of the descriptions of world conditions take on a personal note as Savage relates scenes and experiences from his travels in other countries, such as watching a small child in the Thailand jungle die from malnutrition and cerebral malaria.

The sermon "Heartbeat of the World" (Week of Compassion, February 18, 1979) has as its purpose "to stir our compassion into action for the needy of the world." It is introduced with these words as the sound of a heartbeat pounds through the sound system:

Listen! Listen to the heartbeat of the world!

It's a sick world. Modern prophets of doom pronounced it a terminal case--soon to die. . . One person just died of starvation. . . And another. 30,000 children will die of hunger and related causes before the sun sets today. While last year, a doctor in Decatur, Illinois made one million dollars from people who wanted to lose weight from over-eating!

There's a hungry world out there!
Spin the globe and focus on Calcutta's crowded streets.
No over-fed people--all lean and gaunt.
Some women topless--not for lewd display,
But from necessity, with rags around torso, seeking modesty.

People sleeping on the sidewalk--no blanket, no shelter.
People living on the sidewalks--no facilities, no shiny kitchen.
Eat with the fingers,
Eat and keep alive--
If one can find food, earn food, steal food!
To the teeming hungry of the world we are called to care!

There's a sick world out there!
Spin the globe and land in Afghanistan.
Life in a rut.
Life in a mold.

Ignorance rampant.
 Do what you're told.
 A country imprisoned in the ancient past:
 Filth and tradition,
 Fear and supersition.
 A nation where Christian witness is against the law.
 To the teeming ignorant of the world
 We have been called to teach that Christ cares.

There's a struggling world out there, and right here!
 Poverty is more than absence of money.
 Poverty is inherited.
 It falls like a rope-net upon your body--
 And man--you're handicapped!
 It eats away your confidence and dreams.
 Your energy it saps.
 It imprisons and debilitates.
 With the teeming poor we are called to share.

Sixty million people added to this planet every year.
 Mouths to be fed.
 Minds to be educated.
 Souls to be nurtured.
 And you and I have been called demonstrate: God loves!

Listen! Listen to the heartbeat of the world!

In that same sermon, references are made to the Vietnam War and the use of napalm, the Bangladesh war, floods in Pennsylvania, and the 1971 earthquake in Southern California.

Some of the events and conditions in American society and around the world mentioned in sermons are: the hostility, loneliness, and brokenness characteristic of many lives . . . racial prejudice . . . injustice and oppression . . . violence, riots, and demonstrations that result from feelings that no one cares . . . depersonalization, and alienation, the overstimulation of television . . . amnesty in 1973 . . . ecology . . . space exploration, the space lab . . . the state of the economy . . . illness and social problems caused by stress,

success-oriented living . . . our materialistic society . . . the
 cries of help that comes to the church--the personal needs,
 wife/child abuse, cults, racial discrimination, poverty,
 depression, unemployment, etc. . . . the war-devastated,
 underdeveloped countries . . . crime and immorality in society .
 . . youth disillusionment with war preparations, waste and
 destruction of the environment . . . the American dream of
 success, the good life, wealth, etc. . . . slogans--"progress
 from technology," "the Expanding Economy," "The Moral Majority" .
 . . the arrest and harassment of Christians in Korea and Russia .
 . . government opposition to work of our missionaries in the
 Philippines . . . changes taking place in and by the church in
 Brazil . . . wars between Iran and Iraq, Ethiopia and Samatra . .
 . arms race between the United States and Russia . . . Three-mile
 Island nuclear accident . . . nuclear and chemical waste . . .
 Hostages in Iran . . . Russia in Afghanistan . . . revolutions
 in South America . . . stockpiling of atomic bombs, overkill . .
 . neutron bomb . . . war (in past 2500 years, 11 years of war for
 each 1 year of peace) . . . recent scientific discoveries--"micro
 and macro worlds," genetics, eradication of diseases, etc. . . .
 human rights . . . refugees . . . (and so on).

From this long list of references to events and
 conditions in the world, a picture develops of a preaching style
 designed to move the hearers toward the goal of global
 consciousness. On the other hand, the preaching is not overtly
 prophetic or confrontational in the sense of challenging the
 hearers to take specific social or political stands on particular

issues and situations in Whittier or Southern California. Savage indicates that he witnesses to peace walks, social stands, and other specific actions through personal letters, group discussions, and the activities of the Social Action Department.

The sermons seem designed to stimulate concern, growth in awareness, and a strengthening of motivation for individual and group action (in general terms). What actions result from the sermons are supported by the preacher and other members of the congregation. (And much has been done by that congregation and its members to meet the needs and problems of people in Whittier and throughout the world.)

In the sermon "The Church of My Dreams" (June 30, 1980), that dream includes these characteristics of the church:

A church where LOVE of God, humans and all creation
bubbles forth like a spring;

Where COMMITMENT to Christ is the number one priority
in believers' lives; . . .

Members of the Church of my dreams are aggressive
witnesses--in city hall, legislature, Congress, in
business, labor, and "letters to the editor."

I dream of a church where there is much JUBILANT
CARING; . . .

In the Church of my dreams there is GLOBAL CONCERN--
beginning in Whittier, in California, and to the
uttermost parts of the Universe. . . .

I dream of a Church with EXPANDING PERSPECTIVE: to see
that we are called to be the channels for FULFILLING
GOD'S DREAM . . .

Implications For Preaching That Edifies

Without trying to be comprehensive concerning all that might be learned from this sermon analysis, it may be helpful to

highlight some possible implications for preaching within the ministry of edification. From the sermons of Savage, purposeful teacher-preacher, we may learn:

- the importance of purposeful preaching;
- some possible expectations/desired results for sermons;
- some uses of the sermon as a teaching tool;
- the use of a summary statement (Act of Declaration) at the close of the worship service;
- the integration of the "Invitation" into the sermon;
- the importance of being aware that one's audience may include non-members, as well as church members;
- the importance of directing sermons to the particular audience and indicating implications for their lives, as individuals and as a congregation.
- the use of illustrations to help hearers recognize the sermon's relevance to their common, contemporary experiences;
- the importance of relating the biblical message to people's beliefs, attitudes, and actions today;
- the usefulness of long-range planning with an overall view of seasonal emphases, theological concepts, social issues, personal concerns, congregational emphases, and recurring themes to be considered during a typical year;
- an emphasis on churchwide concerns and the observance of such Special Days as Week of Compassion, Worldwide Communion Sunday, and Reconciliation Sunday;
- the importance of helping the congregation to be a caring community, with concern for one another and reaching out to others;

- sermon preparation in light of congregational goals;
- the use of preaching within the congregations overall planning processes;
- the use of preaching to help the hearers become better informed church members concerning their faith, the work of the church, and possibilities for service and witness in society.
- the importance of helping the congregation develop a global consciousness.

CHAPTER 5

WESLEY P. FORD: PASTORAL PREACHER

For this analysis of Wesley P. Ford's sermons, I was loaned ninety sermons, covering a span of twenty-six years.¹ Most of them had been mimeographed as transcribed from tapes taken as they were being preached. A good number had found their way into print in Pulpit Preaching, New Pulpit Digest, and Pulpit Digest. Detailed analysis was made of sixty-six of these sermons: fifteen available from the 1950s, twenty-five from the 1960s, twenty-five from the 1970s, and one from 1980. All but four of these sermons were preached at the Pasadena church where Ford was minister for twenty-three years: the Central Christian Church which became the First Christian Church when it moved from downtown Pasadena. The other four sermons were preached after his retirement: three at the Orange First Christian Church and the last at the Christian Church of Laguna Hills.

In addition to these sermons, valuable information was received during a two-hour interview with Ford, based on questions gleaned from a reading of the sermons. Some of the observations included in this analysis are based on personal knowledge gained during the four years I served as Ford's

¹This analysis appeared in fuller form in a paper prepared for the class "Preaching and Revivalism as Forces in American History," taught by Ronald E. Osborn, School of Theology at Claremont, May 4, 1982.

associate at the Pasadena church and through thirty years of friendship.

The Importance of Knowing Your Audience

Wesley Ford believes in starting with people--those to whom he will be speaking. He begins with people and what needs to be said to them in the light of where they are, their needs, their experiences, their need to grow and stretch their minds, hearts, and wills. The emphasis of his preaching is pastoral. For him, pastoral preaching and pastoral calling get high priority and go hand in hand. Both are vital to people's growth.

In discussing this approach during the interview, Ford advised preachers to look around, relate to people, see their needs, know their feelings, see what is happening to them and pick the "word" (idea, topic, message) that is ready and has to be said. "Pick the plum that is ripest," is a phrase he credits to Carl S. Patton, his professor of Homiletics and New Testament at Pacific School of Religion.

Ford finds that his pastoral approach to preaching lends itself to long-range planning in relation to the basic needs of his people, while allowing him flexibility to adjust his plans to meet specific, immediate needs as they arise. In planning ahead, he likes to schedule a series of sermons on a general subject that can be developed in a variety of ways.

Ford's sermons might be best characterized as topical. Beginning with people's needs, he uses biblical texts and the biblical message to support what he believes must be said to them

at that particular time. He does not usually preach to expound a biblical text or to dig out the meanings that might be found in it. He hopes that what he is saying is in the truth and spirit of the Bible and what it is saying. As he pointed out in the interview, the prophets began where people lived, and so did Jesus. Jesus knew the scriptures, but began talking about birds, farmers, tragedy, outcasts of society, relationships, and so forth. Thus, his preaching was more vital for people.

Whether Ford starts a sermon with a scripture text or story, a biblical theme, or a contemporary life situation, he soon seeks to relate the gospel to the hearers' needs and experiences. "I try to keep contemporary, and as Carl Patton used to say, 'read the Bible and the newspaper at the same time,'" is his explanation. His sermons almost always include a section giving several specific, concrete suggestions on ways the sermon's theme might relate to the hearers' lives.

As stated in the interview, Ford tries to appeal to the minds more than to the emotions of his hearers. He respects his hearers' ability to think and make decisions. He sees this as being quite compatible with the basic rational approach of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). However, "he shies away from the abstract." Thus, his sermons do not delve deeply and extensively into general theological doctrines. He believes that sermons must deal with the concrete and apply to real life situations. He usually presents his basic themes and their applications in a logical, clearly stated manner. The people are left free to appropriate his points as they wish and can. There

is little or no emotionally charged persuasive technique used. This does not mean that his sermons are bereft of emotion. He himself becomes emotionally involved in what he is saying. His hearers are pulled into the sermon and their interest held, perhaps because his applications "hit close to home."

In analyzing Ford's sermons, I concluded that he usually directs his sermons more to his hearer's personal lives than to their actions as a corporate body. Some sermons include direct or indirect applications for the gathered community, its leadership, outreach, unity, and so forth. However, in general the work and interests of the institutional church do not receive too much attention except as these might be affected by the changed ideas, attitudes, and actions of the members who make up the church. There is a good deal of concern about the oneness and inclusiveness of the church family and for the care of persons within and outside the church fellowship.

Sermon Must "Go Somewhere"

"A sermon has to have some movement, to go someplace," in Ford's judgment. "It must start . . . and go." The preacher must know where he or she is going and stay on the same theme throughout. Here Ford practices what he preaches. As a parishioner said, "He tells us what he is going to say, he says it, and then he tells us what he said."

His sermons usually begin with a rather long introduction in which he sets forth the theme and gives some situational and biblical background for what he is going to say. Sometimes the

theme is stated in a sentence or two somewhere in this early part of the sermon. However, it is not usually stated in a pointed way. You have to listen for it.

The main body of the sermon is developed in a series of points or perhaps more than one series of points. The section of the sermon in which Ford seeks to suggest ways the theme may relate to the hearers' lives is almost always stated in a series of two to four points with appropriate elaborations on each one. These points are usually fairly specific ideas/attitudes/actions which might be "taken home and applied to daily life."

The concluding paragraph usually is short and recaps in a few words what the main points have been. Then Ford is in the habit of ending with a brief prayer which again relates closely to what he has been saying. In the interview, he indicated that he began this practice as "somewhat of a rebellion" against the early preaching he heard which always ended in an emotional exhortation, leading into the invitation hymn. Thus, his sermons end with a prayer for divine help and guidance rather than with verbal pressure on the people for a particular decision or action.

Ford's sermons tend to be primarily didactic with an assumed or briefly stated kerygmatic message underlying the implications he suggests for the hearers' own growth (in faith and in their ability to relate that faith to their lives within the church and in society).

The general consensus of parishioners in Pasadena is that his sermons are profound, biblical, and practical; that the

hearer always goes home with something to think about and act upon.

Recurring Theme: Right Relationships

In the sermon "Reality of Dying" (April 16, 1972), Ford begins by explaining his onetime reluctance to preach on death, and then states, ". . . I am convinced now that all human experience merits consideration under the aegis of worship." Marriage, new and old morality, life's transitions, fun and enjoyment, success and failure, war, race relations, poverty, gratitude, family, world-citizenship, compassionate living, use of time and talents, human rights, faith, neighborliness, human freedom, responsibility, openness, growth, grief, inclusiveness . . . these are only some of the topics treated in the sermons analyzed.

In the interview, Ford was asked to identify what he felt was the recurring theme throughout his preaching. Without hesitating, he said, "Right relationships with God and to people." This theme is reflected in some of the sermon concerns listed above and in others discovered during the analysis. In sermon after sermon, both the basic message and the specific applications for the hearers' lives concern growth in these divine-human relationships.

A few words and phrases lifted from various sermons may underline this relational aspect of Ford's preaching: trust in God . . . seek God with all your heart . . . live a triumphant faith . . . the daily discipline of searching and praying . . .

Christ is relevant for issues of life . . . build bridges . . . oneness of humanity . . . Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man . . . live outward to all . . . live together as part of God's family . . . work on issues that are vital to the life and welfare of mankind. . . our mission is to pioneer a new level of understanding and relationship . . . caring and compassion . . . our life of love is an important witness . . .

Ford's pastoral relationship with his hearers, so evident in his sermonic style, is founded on a basically optimistic view of their capacity to grow. He summed up this view in these words, "The goal of being a Christian is always ahead . . . It never 'is' . . . It is always becoming."

Thus much of Ford's preaching deals with growing, reaching toward one's potentials as a child of God and brother/sister of others. Many of the specifics of his sermonic applications suggest steps in this growth process in relation to various areas of life. Each person is seen as being loved by God, as having worth and dignity, and free to shape his/her life with God's help.

Ford is realistic concerning human short-comings and the need for growth, the need for change into more loving individuals. For him, sin is real, but it is not so much of the flesh as of the spirit. To cut off relationships is sin. To treat people with less love and respect than God would treat them is sinful.

God is love. Belief in this aspect of God's nature is quite evident in Ford's sermons. God is concerned about each

person. This love is experienced as an abiding presence. It also is experienced as judgment. The littleness of our love is judged in the light of the bigness of God's love. Our business is to treat others as God would treat them. When we do not, we experience God's love as judgment on our sin. In discussing this, Ford observed, "Of course, treating others as God would, got Jesus crucified and could cause ministers to lose their pulpits."

In Jesus Christ, we see the nature and degree of God's love for all people. In the interview and in a sermon entitled, "The Shape of the Cross" (April 24, 1973), Ford expanded on Jesus' role as pointing both to right relationships to God and to people. The shape of the cross reminds us that religion is both vertical to God and horizontal to love of neighbor. (Some churches emphasize one at the expense of the other and make an incomplete witness.) The higher Jesus reached toward the Father, the farther he had to reach out beyond religious narrowness, national and racial boundaries, and all human systems. People are not ready to go as far as Jesus did in loving people. When we take what we find in reaching toward God and with it, reach out to others as Jesus did, then we get into trouble with the world's view of things. When we get beyond "our group" we get into trouble with those with a narrower reach. The sermon, "The Shape of the Cross," contains this insightful sentence:

This is the irony, that history should have ready such an instrument of death for the man who was condemned because his life was expressed in the shape of the cross, a horizontal against a vertical, an outreach against an upreach.

As stated earlier, Ford's efforts to edify his congregation seem more concerned about building up the members' individual lives, faith and love than emphasizing the life and work of the corporate body. However, some of the corporate concerns he mentions in sermons include: church unity . . . inclusiveness to all . . . the necessity of vital fellowship and faith for growth . . . the importance of service and witness to all people . . . the oneness of the church . . . "our interpretation of the gospel is the hope of mankind" . . . learning about our missionaries (Africa) . . . the need for leaders who have aspirations and dreams and who prod us into running . . . the church hearing the world's cry for acceptance and belonging . . . the church as a family . . . the Great Commission . . . the need to communicate with various means (use of media/electronics, drama, teaching, preaching) . . . worship . . . speaking out in face of racial tensions and other problems in society . . . need for bridge-building within the church . . . dialogue between people of races should begin within the church . . . care for persons ("well" or "sick") . . . being growth-oriented . . . faith and freedom . . . priesthood of all believers . . . stewardship . . . the need for the church to set apart a ministry (clergy) . . . and (a series on) the history and beliefs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Many of these corporate concerns are directly or indirectly related to the the recurring theme of right relationships with God and to people which Ford identified as characteristic of his preaching.

After analyzing the sermons, questions were raised in the interview regarding his beliefs about the Kingdom of God. Some sermons gave the impression that he believes that the Kingdom could be present reality on earth in a changed society as well as culminating in the future. For instance, in "Thy Kingdom Come" (March 4, 1962) he states,

The kingdom is a social goal and a present reality and in both aspects we have personal responsibility. . . . It is something we can expect . . . prepare for . . . permit . . . We talk sometimes of building the kingdom, but God is the architect-builder, and when confronted daily by God's design, the questions is: shall we permit it?

In his sermon "Love's Manners" (June 8, 1975), Ford indicates that

The kingdom . . . is a long range goal in big terms including justice and peace. It is also kindness, good will, courtesy, graciousness and generosity on our streets everyday.

In the interview, Ford acknowledged his belief that the Kingdom on earth is a possibility; otherwise why pray, "Thy Kingdom come?" In Jesus' terms, the Kingdom is earthly oriented. Ford is not able to say what the Kingdom would be like, but it surely would be a society where persons love and respect each other without respect to boundaries. There might still be pain and sin and a need to grow, and everyone might not act like saints. When the boundaries that divide us racially and nationally are overcome so that we do not have groups/nations that have to be killed as our "enemies" then we will be getting on toward the Kingdom.

Ford realizes that he may be too optimistic, but he does not want to give up on human nature and its possibilities. Jesus

revealed what human nature can become.

A Long-Term View of Events/Issues in Society

The fourth category of analysis concerns ways the sermons reflect what was happening in society and the world. In the light of Ford's beliefs concerning the Kingdom of God on earth and his personal convictions on race relations, justice, and peace (evidenced by his involvement on the Regional Social Concerns Committee in the 1960s), what is his approach in preaching on social issues?

Of the sixty-six sermons analyzed, less than one-half deal with social concerns either in a substantial way or incidentally. A few sermons have a social concern as their major thrust, including "This Is the World, I Live Here" (October 3, 1954) with its emphasis on world citizenship; "Something Happened on the Way to the City" (May 19, 1968) which was a response to the then current unrest and riots in American cities, including Los Angeles; and "The Rainbow Bridge" (January 26, 1969) which deals with human relations in the light of racial difficulties.

Social issues which are discussed within the context of the larger themes of particular sermons, used as illustrations of general problems, and referred to directly or indirectly in the analyzed sermons include: race relations . . . exclusiveness in aspects of society, including the church . . . war/peace . . . poverty . . . disease and hunger . . . ignorance . . . international relationships . . . human rights . . . disarmament

. . . world trade . . . a world in turmoil . . . "living in the presence of revolution" . . . dissatisfaction of much of the world's population for their "second-class citizenship" . . . economics and affairs in the marketplace . . . missiles and atomic warfare . . . urban crisis . . . sex delinquency . . . riots and marches . . . oppressive rule . . . religious intolerance . . . segregation and the after-effects of slavery . . . "the loneliness and alienation of our time" . . . the draft . . . Vietnam War . . . polarization in American society . . . pollution . . . population explosion . . . management and labor relations . . . and references to social problems as a general category to be considered.

There is a marked increase in the treatment of social issues, especially concerning racial tensions, in the 1968 and 1969 sermons analyzed in comparison to those preached earlier. References to the Vietnam War and related concerns are found in some 1970 sermons as illustrations of issues facing the world and the hearers as Christians living out their faith in such a world.

In the interview, Ford indicated that he tries to include some treatment of, or at least references to, various social issues in many sermons rather than devoting some sermons to specific issues such as peace or race relations. Even so, through the years some of his parishioners thought that he said too much in this regard. Other, particularly youthful members, criticized him for not saying enough.

He tries to preach from a long-range point of view. Thus, he does not have to worry about his hearers needing to get

everything from one sermon. He seeks to help them grow over a period of time in their social consciousness and active concern, especially in the light of his continual preaching on love of all people. Particular social issues change but the basic need for loving relationships continues in whatever situation that may arise. Recently he has been talking more about atomic power, space exploration, sources of energy, and scientific discoveries and what these can mean to the people of the world. He believes in preaching to the world in which people live which includes both human potentials and serious problems.

In "A Nation Under God" (January, 1966), Ford sees that our hope for human history must finally issue from the purpose of the Eternal, and states his belief in human progress . . . but it is in a jerky line.

A Little About Style

Ford often uses a few lines of poetry and examples from literature, as well as biblical quotations and references, as illustrations. Also, two of the delights of hearing Ford preach are his use of an extensive vocabulary and his short, terse sentences--sentences that capsulize an idea in a vivid, memorable way. The following lose some of their impact out of context, but perhaps they convey some of the lively flavor of Ford's use of words in communicating the Word:

"Blind! Having seen black, she could not see man."

"Our social and political worlds cry out for Ph.D's in the field of integrity."

"Silence is betrayal."

"'He has risen' became the continental divide."

"Only 'Uncle God' is dead . . . God, the Lord of life and history, reigns."

"The more Jesus looked up, the more he turned to lift men up."

"Rather than a blueprint we are left with inquenchable hungers, inquiring minds, and Jesus Christ as a compass."

In concluding the interview, Ford said something like this, "I try to help people grow. A Christian is always becoming. I have more ripe topics coming off my plum tree than I can ever handle. Ideas jump out all over--ideas related to where people are on the edge of growth."

That statement suggests an excellent attitude and approach for a preacher within the ministry of edification.

Implications for Preaching That Edifies

While the following list of possible implications is not exhaustive of what might be drawn from the findings reported in this chapter, it does lift up some important emphases. From Ford's pastoral preaching, we may learn:

- the importance of knowing one's audience, following his advice to "look around, relate to people, see their needs, know their feelings, see what is happening to them, and pick the 'word' (idea, topic, message) that is ready and has to be said";

- long-range planning in relation to people's basic needs, but with a flexibility that allows for adjustments to meet specific, immediate needs as they arise;

-a thematic emphasis on right relationships with God and other persons;

-a concern to help one's hearers grow toward fulfillment of their potentials as children of God and brothers/sisters of others;

-a concern for the oneness and inclusiveness of the church;

-a respect for one's hearers' ability to think and make their own decisions and an optimistic view of their capacity to grow in faith and love;

-the importance of making one's message concrete and directed to real life situations rather than merely emphasizing abstract, general concepts;

-the inclusion of specific implications for the hearers' lives and suggestions of things to think about and do;

-an endeavor to raise the congregation's social consciousness, growing out of their basic concern for all people.

CHAPTER 6

EDWIN C. LINBERG: BIBLICAL PREACHER

Edwin C. Linberg preached his first sermon as minister of Gateway Christian Church in Los Angeles on January 13, 1963. Five and three-fourths years later, on September 8, 1968, he preached his first sermon at the Temple City Christian Church, where he is still serving as minister. For this sermon analysis, Linberg loaned me loose-leaf notebooks, containing over 600 of the sermons he preached during these twenty years of ministry in Southern California. After scanning these sermons, I chose 40 to analyze according to the four categories described in Chapter 3. (The first sermons that he preached in the two churches above were included in this forty.) Also during a lengthy interview, Linberg shared helpful information concerning his philosophy and experiences as a preacher. The following comments and conclusions are based on both the sermon analysis and the insights gained in the interview.

The Preacher's Self-Identification
and Approach to Preaching

In our interview, we discussed phrases that might be used to identify or characterize him as a preacher. We agreed that he is a teaching preacher and a prophetic preacher, and that he seeks to be pastoral in speaking to people's felt and unfelt needs. However, the phrase that might best identify him is "biblical preacher."

Edwin Linberg makes a conscious effort to use a biblical text in each sermon. He often concentrates on one of the passages listed in the lectionary for a given Sunday. Even when he chooses a non-lectionary passage to fit a special emphasis or need, he uses his chosen text as an introduction to the main thrust of the sermon, as a way to illuminate what needs to be said, and in the sermon's conclusion. In other words, the text is a beginning point and a basic ingredient that permeates the sermon throughout its development. In the sermon "Christmas in July" (No. 350), he states:

I take pride in being what I describe as "a Biblical preacher." By that I mean to suggest that I prefer for most of my sermon ideas to come out of Biblical texts and concepts and make contact with the real world, instead of finding a Biblical text or idea to justify an idea which comes to me. Either way is legitimate, but I prefer to come at it from the Bible. Because I like this method and feel most comfortable in it, I find myself making use of a lectionary from time to time.

Since making that statement in 1969, he has increased his use of the lectionary. In planning ahead and outlining his sermon topics for a block of time, the first thing he does is look at the lectionary listings for those Sundays. He reads all the texts and makes a few notes. Second, he takes note of any special days and emphases. He usually plans a Lenten series and an Advent series, and may or may not depart from the lectionary to do this. He gives special emphasis to the Week of Compassion and Reconciliation offerings. He may plan something special around congregational goal-setting time, during the budget process, and on national holidays. A third and overriding

concern has to do with congregational needs which the lectionary texts may or may not meet. Also, occasionally he likes to deal with entire books of the Bible or with biblical personalities, such as the prophets.

Two quotations from Linberg's sermons provide some indications about his approach to preaching through the years. The first is from the sermon preached on his first Sunday at Gateway Christian Church in 1963. The sermon is entitled "Building a Great Pulpit" (No. 65).

When I speak of building a pulpit, . . . I am thinking of building a pulpit that is great because of the influence it has in the lives of men and of the message which is proclaimed from it. . . . As I speak of the minister's role in this matter of preaching I do so once again with a sense of humility, for the task of preaching is all but overwhelming when its magnitude is considered. Basically in preaching the minister is attempting to speak for God to his people. The words that he speaks in the process of delivering a sermon are supposed to bring to bear upon the lives of people who listen, God's Word, with power and with conviction. This is an awesome task.

However, he also emphasizes in the sermon that the task of building a great pulpit is shared with the congregation. The worshiping community's task is to listen responsibly, realizing that the words spoken from the pulpit are meant to make a difference in the hearers' lives.

Some six hundred sermons later in 1977, he preached a sermon on preaching, entitled "Tell His Good News" (No. 664), as part of a Lenten series on "Our Ministry." It lifts up the idea that the sermon is an event in which God can address the worshiping congregation through words spoken and through words heard and appropriated. Again, speaker and hearers share

responsibility for the good news being told to the world.

Preaching needs to be grounded in Biblical study. I need to study to be able to interpret the good news in sermons. You need to study to be able to listen with understanding.

Preaching needs to be aware of the world in which we live. I need to know the world so the good news can be addressed to needs. You need to know the world so you can respond to those needs in light of the good news.

Preaching needs to be undergirded with prayer. I need to pray so the Spirit of God can be manifested in the words I speak. You need to pray so your hearts and minds are open to the truth of the good news, even when that truth is painful or disturbing.

Preaching needs to be supported. I need to know you support me in proclaiming the good news and in exercising my freedom to interpret it as I understand it. You need to know I support you in the ways you choose to enact the spoken word in the world. . . .

Our ministry of preaching seeks to tell His good news in the world, through both the spoken and the enacted word.

In our interview (six years later), Linberg talked of the dialogue that should take place between the preacher and the congregation. The latter must do more than listen passively. If the relationship of preacher and congregation extends over a period of time, ideas may be planted which later germinate and grow, resulting in deepened commitment, vital decisions and actions on the part of those involved. In the dialogue that takes place, the responsibility for what is preached is shared, both as it is spoken and heard and as it is enacted in the world.

Purposes in the Mind of the Preacher

Linberg's ministerial style fits well with what has been said in this paper regarding the ministry of edification. He

intentionally involves his congregation in a mutual ministry. His administrative approach is based on the importance of congregational participation in goal-setting, decision-making, and a shared leadership in the total body's life and work.¹ In the interview, I asked him how he saw his preaching fitting into this view of ministry.

Through preaching, he enters into the dialogue (mentioned above) with the congregation concerning what the church is to be and do in the light of the gospel. He does this in three ways:

First, through preaching, he tries to share a vision of the faith and to challenge the hearers with what discipleship may mean and look like in today's world. He seeks to state the vision so that the hearers are confronted with both its corporate and individual dimensions and with both its social and personal implications.

Second, he seeks to provide support and encouragement by affirming that "we can do this!" God has promised to be with us if we take the risk and step out to fulfill our mission as God's servants in the world.

Third, he attempts to give some body (content) to what is being said and done. This is the teaching function of preaching. He spells out some specific implications and applications: here are some things to think about; here are some things to do. For

¹Edwin C. Linberg, "An Examination of the Role of the Clergy as an Enabler of the Development and Growth of the Ministry of the Laity" (D. Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1975)

instance, if he is challenging the hearers to be peacemakers (as he does in several sermons analyzed), he may suggest that they investigate the issues, let political candidates know their views on the arms race, work for the passage of the nuclear freeze initiative, and increase prayers for peace. (These specifics are some listed in "Choose Life . . . So You and Your Children May Live" No. 862.)

He is conscious of the need to give specifics, especially when he is trying to be prophetic. At least one of the suggestions should be something everyone can do, even those who do not agree on the issue. For instance, they can pray about the issue. They can investigate the situation.

He believes that a sermon must be practical if it is to be helpful. Thus he preaches with the expectation that what is said will have some effect on the hearers' lives. The purpose or desired effect of a sermon may be to inspire the hearers, resulting in renewed faith and commitment to God in Christ. It may be to challenge the hearers to think about new ideas, new possibilities, new interpretations. It may be to call them to some types of action in response to facts presented, changes envisioned, and alternatives suggested. It may be to encourage and support them in the establishment of better interpersonal relationships within their families and daily situations. It may be to equip them to fulfill better their corporate ministry as a church of Jesus Christ.

Often he raises questions in his sermons designed to cause the hearers to relate what is being said to themselves,

to the Temple City church as a body, or to their nation. Here are a few examples:

- "What does your "yes" mean?" (in sermon No. 781, dealing with meaning of one's confession of faith in Christ).

- "What about us? What about you, and you, and you? . . . Is it [God's mission entrusted to us] important to us?" (in sermon No. 712 on "Strategy for Mission").

- "Which way Temple City Christian Church?" (in sermon No. 387, relating general nature of the church to their 1970-71 priorities).

- "What are we going to do? What can we do?" (in sermon No. 330 in a series on "A Church For These Times").

- "What are you going to do about our teaching ministry?" (in sermon No. 160 which lamented the need for teachers, etc.).

- "What has this to do with us?" (in sermon No. 714, addressing the hearers as Christian citizens on the nation's stand on war and peace).

After raising such questions, Linberg usually goes on to suggest some possible answers and implications. In analyzing his sermons, I found that it was fairly easy to identify his "expectations/desired results" whether they were explicitly stated or implied in his general remarks. What I listed in this category varied from such general statements as "to be an example for our children of what it means to be a Christian" and "to accept Christ as Lord over all of life" to such specifics as "join in trying to reverse the arms race" and "volunteer to serve on the Christian Social Concerns Ministry Group [of the congregation]."

The Audience Being Addressed

Our second general category in the analysis deals with the questions, "What assumptions about the audience seem to be in the mind of the preacher?" In general, it might be safe to say that Linberg assumes that the majority in his audiences are confessed Christians and members of his congregation. Thus he addresses the hearers as persons whose responses to his messages will be built on the foundation of their prior faith and commitment to God in Christ. There is some recognition that some listeners may not have made an initial decision for Christ, but most of the sermons I read do not seek to convert so much as to challenge the hearers to grow in an understanding of their faith and to act on that faith in all aspects of their lives.

In almost half the sermons, Linberg addresses the audience as both a corporate body and a collection of individuals. In other words, he seems to be expecting their responses to affect their life and work together as a congregation, and also to influence their individual lives as they scatter into society. For instance, in the 1960 sermons on the racial situation, there are suggested actions both for the congregation to take and for individuals to consider in their various relationships, neighborhoods, and daily activities.

Several sermons are obviously addressed to the congregation in the development of its corporate life, such as those dealing with the church's ministry, those preached on anniversaries, and those given at organizational planning and

goal-setting times and during the budget process. The preacher uses some of these sermons to express his convictions that current issues in the church and/or society call for the church to examine itself and its priorities. Examples of this are seen in the series "A Church For Our Times" (Nos. 329-331), "Which Way the Church?" (No. 387), "Bringers of Life" (No. 770), and "What We Yet May Be" (No. 846).

Many of the sermons are directed at the individuals within the congregation with the desire to affect their lives in and beyond the congregation. Some of these lift up the meaning of faith and possible implications for their daily lives, such as in "The Uplifted Christ Lifts Men" (No. 314), "Between Law and Grace" (No. 684), and "Of Magic, Faith, and Duty" (No. 800). Some address the hearers as parents and other adults concerned with children, such as in "When God Is Not There!" (No. 76) and "Parenting: For Parents and Others" (No. 713). Others address the church members as United States citizens who have a responsibility to bring their Christian convictions to bear on their duties as citizens. I identified six of the forty sermons analyzed as ones having such a perspective at least to some degree.

A Search for Balance

In our interview, Linberg indicated that in recent years, he has been conscious of trying to give more balance to his preaching. By this he means more balance in stressing both personal faith and public faith, in dealing with both individual

concerns and social concerns. He especially is trying to give more attention to the personal and individual dimension. Of course, he is not neglecting the public and social side, but he has preached so long at the Temple City church that the congregation already knows what he thinks about such social issues as peace, the nuclear arms race, race relations, and Christian social responsibility. In the last couple of years, he has put more emphasis on personal witnessing which reflects the congregation's growing concern for evangelism and church growth. (In scanning the 600 sermons he provided for my use, I did not find evidence of any marked imbalance of themes. However, I did note that he dealt with social concerns more than some preachers might risk doing.)

In the beginning of this chapter, Linberg was identified as a biblical preacher. His increased use of the lectionary and the three steps in sermon planning (described in that earlier section) should help him maintain the thematic balance he seeks.

What themes have been included in his preaching through the years? As stated earlier, Lenten and Advent series are given each year. These usually center on Christ--what he reveals about God, his meaning for our lives, what he calls us to do and be, our response through personal discipleship and the church's ministry, and so forth. There are often individual sermons or series of sermons on aspects of the church's ministry--teaching, witnessing, outreach, service, proclamation, reconciliation, being a caring community, and social conscience. Recurring themes include prayer, worship, the family/home, stewardship, the

Bible (what it is, as well as sermons on particular books and personalities), death, baptism, the nature of the church, and congregational goals and priorities. Theological treatments are given to the meaning of faith, grace, forgiveness, the cross, the resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the will of God, spiritual growth, discipleship, and so forth.

Besides the Lenten-Easter and Advent-Christmas seasons, other special days and emphases are regularly recognized, such as the church's anniversary, Week of Compassion, Christian Family Week, Pentecost, Freedom and Democracy Sunday, Labor Day, Reconciliation Offering, Worldwide Communion Sunday, Reformation Sunday, and Thanksgiving. Perhaps not all are included in every year's sermon planning. Some may have received more attention in Linberg's earlier ministry than presently. In highlighting holidays and special offerings, he seeks to do more than deal with the obvious and often uses them as "jumping off" places to expand the congregation's thinking. For instance, when dealing with offerings, he moves beyond the giving of money to a consideration of what other actions might be taken to meet human need.

Linberg's handling of social issues, churchwide concerns, and other beyond-the-congregation situations and events will be considered in the next section. It is enough here merely to recognize that they have provided recurring, significant themes through the years.

The theology that is communicated through the sermons analyzed is definitely Christocentric. In our interview, Linberg

agreed that this is true. He takes the incarnation seriously. God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. His sermons stress the importance of commitment to God in Christ, the acceptance of Christ as Lord of one's total life, and what such a relationship with Christ may mean for one's life both in the church and daily in the world. In the interview, he summed this up with these words, "Be what you are--if you are a Christian, be one 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

One of the sermons that I found effective in presenting Linberg's theology is "The Uplifted Christ Lifts Men" (No. 314) which was preached as the last sermon at Gateway Christian Church and the first sermon at Temple City. He shares "three major points in my life in which the uplifted Christ has been and is now at work."

First, the uplifted Christ lifts me out of fear. . . . I realize that God's love for me in Christ does not seek to protect me by keeping me from the things I fear. Instead, that love goes with me to help me confront as creatively as possible the things which cause me fear.

Second, the uplifted Christ lifts me out of sin. . . . As I matured I came to see sin in terms of attitudes which manifest themselves in actions, instead of the actions themselves. . . . When I saw myself for what I was, I wondered how God could love me. Then I began learning about grace. . . . God accepts me as I am. I don't have to earn His love. . . . He only wants me to accept His love by responding with my life to Him and the doing of His will in the world. When I learned that God accepted me as I was, I began to be able to accept myself as I was and to accept others as they were.

Third, the uplifted Christ lifts me out of purposelessness. . . . For me, the most important purpose for living is to be found in being identified with the uplifted Christ. . . . I am suggesting that you need to be so identified with the uplifted Christ that you find your purpose in serving Him in

the world. . . . As I have come to understand Jesus Christ, He was supremely a man for others. . . . The closer I get to people, the more certain I am that I am fulfilling God's will for my life in this world. I share this with you in the hope that you will find your purpose for living by being deeply involved with people, all kinds of people. The uplifted Christ calls you and me to join Him in a ministry to people.

May your lives be lifted up from all that limits and confines you by the power of the uplifted Christ.

Perhaps additional references will reveal some of the basic beliefs which undergird his concept of ministry--a ministry which emphasizes both personal faith and courageous action in the church and in society.

Faith, the complete trusting of one's life to the love of Christ and total obedience to His way, must be our aim. ("Of Magic, Faith and Duty," No. 800).

Grace is God's unearned love. . . . Choosing grace over law placed obedience by choice over obedience by demand. . . . While God expects nothing less than our best, our hope is not in what we have done, but in what God has done in Christ. ("Between Law and Grace," No. 684).

There can be no mighty works of salvation in the world until the ethic of Jesus is radically applied to all of life. He still waits for us to accept Him; to make Him Lord of our lives. ("The Birth of a Misfit," No. 189).

In resurrection they came to know that a life so alive with God could not be ended by death. Far from shutting Him [Christ] out of the human scene, death followed by resurrection, only released Him as a universal and healing presence in the world.

. . . With the resurrection comes the reality that God's purposes in the world cannot be ultimately thwarted.

. . . In short, the resurrection is the biblical answer to the perennial question, "How can you possibly believe in a good God in a world like this?". . . We have stated that being a proclaimer depends upon consistency between our words and our life style. It is quite clear, then, our responsibility for proclaiming this good news is carried to

individuals and to the whole society. . . . So, you and I have to struggle valiantly against those forces which deny life to anyone and those forces which deny the reign of God over men's lives. And that, my friends, is what it is all about. It means saying "no" to injustice, to all that dehumanizes, to compartmentalizing people by skin color, or address, or education, to conformity which squeezes all the life out of us, to war, and to the comfort of the status quo which just may be strangling our brothers. Saying "no" to such things is costly. But Easter is a sign of hope. It points to a new order of things. (Called to Be. . . . Proclaimers, "No. 379, last in a Lenten series).

These statements illustrate the kerygmatic characteristics of Linberg's sermons. However, his normal style is definitely didactic. He states that "preaching at its best is teaching" (No. 330). He also has shown that it is prophetic in the sense of relating commitment to Christ with concern for what is happening beyond the confines of the institutional church. His sermons are grounded in the Bible, full of content (ideas, affirmations, facts), and relevant to today's world situation. In the tradition of Alexander Campbell, his sermons are "reasonable, rational, well thought out, presenting the 'facts' of the Gospel"² and facts about the current social scene.

In our interview, he acknowledged that his sermons have been criticized for being too academic and logical, for not appealing enough to feeling, and for not containing enough stories with human interest. He shared that one of his "astute" lay people commented that his sermons were easy to follow since he "put out sign posts" in a logical manner, but that people do

²Donald Ray Jarman, "Kerygma and Didache in the Homiletical Theory of Alexander Campbell" (Rel. D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1970) p. 41.

not make decisions or act as much on logic as on emotions. Linberg is consciously trying to change his preaching style to overcome such criticisms which he accepts as having some validity.

He has come to appreciate the importance of storytelling as a means of communication in personal conversation and in sermons. Recently he has been sharing more out of his own personal life and experiences with people (while still having concern for confidentiality).

Now he is getting such comments as "your preaching is better than ever" and "you are getting better all the time." He attributes these comments to the fact that his sermons are including more insights and appeals from the personal realm of life experiences, rather than mainly from the realm of ideas and logic as before.

The sermons I read which were given in the last few years do reflect Linberg's attempts to change. There are more illustrations, for instance. Also, the sermons preached in the late 1970s and 1980s are considerably shorter than those of the 1960s.

A Prophetic Church in the World

Linberg's view of being prophetic is reflected in his words of challenge to the members of the Temple City Christian Church on its fortieth anniversary. He emphasizes their potential as proclaimers of good news, pastors to one another, a serving presence in the community, and a prophetic voice in areas

of hunger, race relations, and peace.

To respond to the challenges of these issues, we're going to have to be prophetic. That is, we're going to have to say and act God's truth, risking being unpopular and possibly risking being condemned or even persecuted. I pray for Christ's courage to enable us to be prophetic ("What We Yet May Be," No. 846).

In reading forty of his sermons and scanning several hundred others, I found considerable evidence of his prophetic approach to preaching. Three-fourths of the sermons read contained some reminders that the church exists in the world and thus should be concerned about various events, issues, conditions, implications, influences, and so forth. Certain issues and situations are faced frankly and forthrightly, becoming the main thrusts of challenging sermons. Others are mentioned repeatedly as illustrations and points of concern.

In the interview, Linberg indicated that sermons in which he hits hard on particular issues (such as war/peace, race relations, and the nuclear threat) are the scariest type to give. Yet, he admits a certain ego-enjoyment in laying it out there, of saying the truth as he understands it. He feels that he must speak out on such issues even when he knows it will rankle some people. He probably gets away with such preaching because he consciously tries to be a good pastor to the people at the same time. A few members may not come because they do not want to hear what he is saying, but otherwise, he does not get much flak. The people know that he is not going to lead them on a stupid cause or embarrass them. They know that he will not respond to them on the basis of agreement or disagreement on these issues.

The pastoral and prophetic roles are both important.

As stated above, he grounds his preaching in the biblical message. This is as true of his prophetic preaching as any other. He points to the biblical parallel to the current issues or situation, if there is one. He seeks to emphasize the relevance of the biblical teachings for today.

In "Which Way the Church?" (No. 387), he points out that "the Church of Jesus Christ is in a battle." As it acts in the present and moves into the future:

Will it be an all-out, head-on thrust into the world in which the church takes up the cause of the poor who've never been a part of the American affluence, champion the cause of the victims of racism, challenge the interventionist policy of our government in fighting a war in Southeast Asia? Or will it be merely rendering services to the outside community without trying to change the basic structure of its institutions, avoiding controversy, and for the most part keeping diligently at the tasks of winning persons to Christ, educating children, youth, and adults in the precepts of the faith, and generally building up the strength of the institutional life of the church? Which way the church?

We are discovering together that a deep personal faith without a social conscience is an incomplete Christian witness. We are discovering together that a commitment to radical change in the social order in the name of one's faith in Christ is empty without the roots which reach deeply into the loving spirit of God's presence in one's life.

In this "battle" he seeks to provide the balance in his sermons discussed in the previous section. He believes he must speak out on social issues. Space does not allow a detailed report of all the issues and world conditions he lifted up for the congregation's education and active concern through the years, but they are as wide-ranging as human need, socially and personally.

One of the most "risky" sermons I read was "The Issues Before Us" (No. 135) which deals with specific ballot initiatives in the 1964 elections. One was a proposition for a state lottery and the other was a measure to repeal a previously approved fair housing law. Not only did Linberg present general arguments on the issues, he told how he personally planned to vote. A talk-back session was offered at the end of the worship service. In that sermon he makes these statements about the church's responsibility to deal with moral issues:

The church is concerned with both public and private morality. . . . Despite the cost, when moral issues are on the line the church dare not be guilty of "pussyfooting" in its dealing with these issues. To dodge these issues in order to "save the church from controversy" is to do more to destroy the church and its impact upon the lives of men than any political action it might advocate and take.

What is the responsibility of the pulpit regarding moral issues which face us? . . . First, the pulpit has traditionally been the place at which the church has interpreted, through the preaching of its clergy, God's will to His people. . . . Second, the pulpit must deal with life. . . . Third, the pulpit has been, is now, and must forever be free.

During the 1960s when race relations and the civil rights movement were being brought to the nation's attention, many sermons carried implications for the hearers' Christian faith and concern. Two sermons which deal directly with the situation are "First Be Reconciled to Your Brother" (No. 107) and "Am I My Brother's Keeper" (No. 173).

I read three sermons which have as their main themes the need to be peacemakers, to change national priorities from reliance on war and military might, the insanity of the arms

race, and the threat of nuclear destruction. A series of sermons I did not read is entitled "A Nation Under God" (Nos. 632-637) and deals with such issues as nationalism, the Watergate cover-up, and Christian patriotism.

World hunger is one of the recurring concerns in many of the sermons, as are human rights, poverty, equal employment, pollution and waste of resources, equal treatment of all persons before the law, the needs of the aged, sexism and racism.

This fourth category of analysis raises questions about the preacher's recognition of what is happening in the church, as well as the world, beyond the congregation. This preacher did seem to make an attempt to relate his hearers to the wider church. For instance, in 1968 a series of sermons is based on the themes of the World Council of Church's Fourth Assembly. Also, a sermon refers to the denomination's General Assembly and its resolution on arms control.

In "The Compulsion to Witness" (No. 103) much that is said is based on experiences in regional conferences on the "Ministry of the Laity." One of the sermons listed above on race relations encourages the congregation to approve giving to the special "Concern" offering to support denominational work in relation to civil rights. Later, emphasis is given each year to the Reconciliation offering, as well as the Week of Compassion offering. In the Lenten sermon "Called to Be . . . Revolutionaries" (No. 377), the congregation is urged to consider participating in Project Understanding, an ecumenical approach to white racism.

Implications For Preaching That Edifies

While it may be impossible to include all implications in a brief summary of the foregoing sermon analysis, the following list points to some of what we can learn from this biblical preacher. Linberg calls our attention to:

- the biblical text as the beginning point for sermon development, seeking to discover the biblical message for life and ministry today;

- sermon planning that takes into account lectionary texts, seasonal emphases, and congregational concerns;

- the need for thematic balance which emphasizes individual concerns and social concerns, personal faith and public faith;

- a dialogue relationship with the congregation--the development of mutual trust, acceptance, and understanding with hearers and a sharing together in the search for truth;

- the congregation's responsibility for active listening;

- the use of preaching as a teaching tool;

- preaching that seeks to make a difference in people's lives;

- the recognition that the preacher can share personal feelings, convictions, and experiences, as well as objective information and logical deductions;

- a concern for relating preaching to the church's total ministry through (1) a shared vision and challenge to discipleship, (2) continuing support and encouragement, and (3) practical suggestions;

-the importance of directing the "challenge to discipleship" to the congregation as a whole and to the individuals within it, relating faith in Christ to attitudes and actions;

-the recognition of various aspects of the hearers' lives, such as their responsibilities as U.S. citizens;

-the prophetic preaching approach to social issues which seeks to challenge the church to be prophetic in spite of the risks;

-the encouragement of a caring congregation which shows concern for all members and serves as a caring presence in the surrounding community;

-the intentional use of preaching within the goal-setting, decision-making, and evaluation processes of the congregation;

-the importance of recognizing the congregation's relationship to the wider church in the region and beyond;

-use of the storytelling mode of communication.

CHAPTER 7

KRING ALLEN: EVANGELISTIC PROPHET

Kring Allen was minister of the McCarty Memorial Christian Church in Los Angeles for nearly twenty-three years, retiring June 30, 1976. The sermons analyzed for this study cover this entire period, from the second sermon he preached in that church in 1954 to the last sermon which was given there after his retirement. Most of the sermons are ones he has selected and combined for a book he hopes to publish in the near future. I appreciate being able to read the manuscript for this unpublished book of sermons, as well as the other sermons and materials he shared with me. In a two-hour interview, I not only gained much information about his preaching style and content, I also was able to experience first hand the enthusiasm and passionate concern with which he preached and preaches today as an interim minister.

When Allen went to McCarty Memorial Christian Church in 1954, the church was essentially an all-white congregation. There were two black families in it, but "on the periphery." When he retired in 1976, the congregation was essentially an all-black congregation with a few participating white families.

Midway in his ministry there, the 1967 Watts Riots awoke Los Angeles and the Southern California region to the fact that the Black's (and other minorities') struggle for civil rights was

not just "The South's" problem. Allen had been aware of this fact, and had been preaching about it, for a decade. The question for this sermon analysis is: How did this preacher seek to edify his changing congregation during this explosive area of radical social change?

Preaching FOR God and AGAINST Racism

Allen's sermons reveal both his evangelistic fervor in preaching the good news of God's activity and revelation in Christ and his prophetic zeal in calling the church to change its own racist behavior and to work for change in our racist society. Most of the sermons analyzed contain big doses of both evangelistic and prophetic thrusts, although some may emphasize one or the other as its basic message. In the sermon "Going God's Way" (1954), he sums up for the church what appears to be his own guideline for preaching and acting:

If we would go God's Way, we must have the MIND of Christ, use the METHOD of Christ, proclaim the MESSAGE of Christ, and carry out the MISSION of Christ.

In the interview, I asked him how he uses his preaching to edify his congregation. He answered that he first tries to establish the "true nature of the church" in the minds of the people. The church is not a club, but a creation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people for the glory of God and the service of humanity. A sermon that illustrates this first use of preaching is "Fellowship In the Way" which begins:

The paramount need of the Christian today is to clarify his conception and to deepen his conviction as to the nature of

the Church. . . . God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, raised up the Church to be the fellowship through which Christ could fellowship with his people and they with Him. . . . [The Christian] is to carry the ethical and moral insights of the Redeemed Community out into all the affairs of life. . . . As a Social Fellowship it was inclusive of all races, nationalities, and classes. . . . Seeking and saving is the chief business of the Church. . . . Are we sharing in the Fellowship in the Way? Or are we in the way of the Way?¹

In his sermons, Allen pulls no punches in condemning wrongs he sees in society or in the church. Thus, more than once in the sermons read he criticizes the church for being the most segregated institution in society. For instance in "Open the Door, Brother" (given on television on February 12, 1961), he bluntly states:

When it comes to race, the closed door of the church is more apparent than in practically any other institution on the American scene. . . . Though most major church bodies have spoken clearly for many years in opposition to segregation and discrimination . . . some 95% of the Negro Christians are in segregated churches and about 99% of the Negro churches are in segregated denominations.

We can insist that the church be The Church and practice what it has proclaimed for twenty centuries . . .

This racism in the church must change if it is to "be The Church." The church must help answer the problems of racism, segregation, discrimination, hatred, and fear in society.

Second, through preaching, he tries to clear up false interpretations of the Scriptures. Too often the Scriptures have

¹This sermon was given in 1954 at the State Ministers' Conference at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma and in an abbreviated form as a sermon at McCarty Memorial Christian Church in Los Angeles.

been used to support racist views and to keep black people in an inferior role.

He stresses the historical situation of the biblical accounts out of which the revelations concerning God, Christ, and humanity come. He estimates that 90% of his sermons come from the New Testament with occasional illustrations from the Old Testament. The people must be helped to understand what is revealed through the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are used extensively in his sermons. He usually has a basic text for the sermon, then refers to and quotes from various other passages to illustrate and support what is being said, and sometimes gives rather extensive expositions of passages. The post-retirement sermon, "Gospel in One Word," is based on John 3:16 and begins with a lengthy retelling of the biblical story of God's activity and self-revelation from creation, through the patriarchs, the establishment of the Hebrew nations, the fall of Samaria, the various kings and prophets, the exile, the rise of nationalism in post-exilic times, and so forth until the coming of Jesus. What could be a dull historical-religious survey is quite clear, interesting, and illuminating. After making certain deductions from this retelling of the biblical story concerning the nature of God and the "chosen community," he uses John 3:16 to point out God's all-inclusive, forgiving love revealed in Jesus Christ and proclaims: "The Agape of Jesus is the Gospel. The rest is

commentary. He is the one Word that the world needs. That Word must become flesh and dwell in us if we are Christian." 2

Third, in using preaching to edify, Allen lifts up aspects of Jesus's life and teachings that show his involvement in issues that hurt people--an involvement that got him crucified. An example of this is given in "the Sky Is Red":

As Jesus walked among the people doing good and proclaiming God's will for all men, they called him a devil and plotted against his life. He taught that the truth would set men free but the truth revealed too much wickedness in their lives so they chose darkness rather than the light of truth.

The political, economic, social and religious conditions were more obvious than a red sky in the morning. How could they be so blind? Could it be that their minds were so paralyzed by the poison of prejudices, their hearts so filled with hate and their wills so warped by selfishness that they no longer could see the will of God spelled out in History calling for the Brotherhood of Man?

If Jesus, our great contemporary, were standing on the capital steps of Washington, D.C. today, speaking to a national T.V. audience, he could be saying the same thing to the American people as he told the people in his beloved city of Jerusalem.

In reading Allen's sermons, one gets the impression that he is in the tradition of his Disciple forefather, Alexander Campbell, in believing that if the facts of the Gospel and its implication for the hearer's life are presented, people will respond. The sermons are full of facts--presented in biblical

²In this sermon Allen is following in the tradition of Black folk-preachers, all of whom had a sermon like this in their repertory. See James Weldon Johnson, God's Trombones (New York: Viking, 1927) p. 6.

exposition, in descriptions of situations in the church and society, in rational deductive and inductive logic--and the church is asked to respond with renewed faith and commitment and with courageous, decisive actions for change within the church itself, within the individual members' lives, and in the society at large.

Reading a sermon and hearing a sermon can be quite different. The tone and volume of the voice, the gestures, the intensity of the speaker's presentation, and so forth can only be guessed by the reader. However, after speaking with Allen and noting the style preaching evident in his mimeographed sermons, I can only assume that they were presented with enthusiasm, passion, and power. In our interview, his wife testified to her experience that even today he preaches with excitement. He moves about to give emphasis to his points. He does not read from a manuscript but preaches extemporaneously. In this way, he can respond to the congregation. New ideas can come, ideas upon which he might pick up and go.

Sometimes a sermon is written before it is delivered, sometimes after it is preached. He tapes his sermons. The sermons loaned for my purposes were largely taken from tapes and prepared for publication.

Preaching and Acting in an Explosive Era

The category in our analysis which deals with the ways the preacher "speaks out of and to the historical/cultural/church

situation" is usually the fourth and last considered. However, for this preacher, I wish to consider it next. The segregation and discrimination based on race and class that existed in the church and in society during Allen's ministry in Los Angeles definitely shaped that ministry and his preaching.

Significantly Allen began his ministry at McCarty Memorial Christian Church on "Race Relations Sunday," February 14, 1954. This improving of race relations became a dominant theme during the following two decades.

During the first six months of his ministry at McCarty Memorial, he spent as much time as possible in the public library, reading Black history. In the beginning of his book manuscript, he notes that after this reading

I became aware of the fact that my education had been brain-washed by pro-white culture and tradition. I concluded that the main contributing factor for producing slavery was economic--where the love of money takes priority over the love of God and the love of people. Also, I became convinced that the prime factor in racism is ignorance which produces fear and a swollen ego to the point of lunacy.

He also wrote about one hundred and fifty letters to leading ministers of all denominations in the major cities across the country. He told them of the racial situation he saw in Los Angeles, the changing neighborhood around his church, the need to open the church to all people, and his concern to minister to all without regard to race, class, and condition. He asked for their advice. The "best" advice he got was to take it very slowly because America was not ready for integration. He did not take that advice. Many answers were of no help because these other big city ministers did not know what to do.

The sermons I read from the first years of his ministry at that church indicate that he sought to inform his people about the situation, to challenge them with the implications of the gospel for needed actions and changed attitudes, and to include all people in his audiences. He continued to do this in his sermons throughout his ministry.

Perhaps he could be criticized as a "one-issue" preacher in this regard since other events in the world--the Vietnam War, space travel, the "Cold War," secularism in society, assassinations of our national leaders, and so forth--are mentioned but seem to take a peripheral position to his basic concern for the causes and effects of racism in America. However, he saw the latter as a major contributing factor to these other social problems. For instance, in his preaching he raised questions about America fighting for freedom around the world while some American citizens were not free to register to vote, attend integrated schools, and enjoy some of the other freedoms their white brothers and sisters take for granted.

Not everyone liked what he was saying, of course. On August 25, 1958, his "favorite sermon" entitled, "How Free Is Freedom?" was given on television. He shared with me a copy of one response to this sermon in which he had clearly and thoroughly described the current racial situation. A white school teacher wrote:

I was amazed at your biased statements re the white race. You tarred all white Americans with the same dirty brush. Not once did you mention the thousands of white men who gave their lives to wipe out the stain of slavery. . . . When I taught in San Bernardino County we received an influx of

negroes from the slums of southern states. The negroes who were already established were hostile to the newcomers. . . . What then could be expected of the white taxpayers who eventually were taxed to support these uninvited burdens?

In the beginning, some of his elders asked him to tone down his preaching and pushing for integration. Some whites, of course, left the church. Others wanted to build a separate church rather than invite their black neighbors to join them. The white exodus really began when the congregation turned over 50% black.

Besides preaching, he took other actions in the congregation and elsewhere. Soon after he got to McCarty Memorial, he put a sign on the church, "Welcome All People." However, it took over two years to get Blacks to feel free to come. Integration as such did not really get under way until a black deacon was elected by the congregation. (Allen points out that many blacks do not trust whites. The tragedy is that blacks often segregate themselves for their own protection.)

Allen became very active in the civil rights movement, working for change in society through involvement in secular as well as church-related organizations. In our interview, he said that his actions and involvements demonstrated what he was saying his preaching, as well as providing first-hand experiences for his sermons.

He shared a document he wrote after going with other ministers to Mississippi in August, 1964. He reported his experiences as a counselor in the Mississippi Project which was involved in conducting Freedom Schools, voter registration,

health education, legal research, and other services. On the night of their arrival, one of the Freedom Schools was bombed and destroyed by fire. His experience in Canton, Mississippi, a town torn by hate and fear, certainly influenced his ministry in Los Angeles, California.

Two days before the two clergymen and I left Mississippi for our respective homes, we were walking down a roadway on the campus of Tougaloo Christian College. It was about eleven p.m. The moon was about to drop below the horizon of the Mississippi sky. We had been listening to the district directors reports from various points within the state - the killings, beatings, shootings, arrests, bombings of headquarters, burning of churches, burning crosses, people losing their jobs, hunger and struggle of the people for freedom and voice . . . our hearts were low. One clergyman said, "When I leave this state I think I will spit, urinate and wash my hands." Another remarked, "Though there are some elements of hope, I am quite sure that it is going to get darker before the dawn." Then I remembered a statement that Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, when minister of the City Temple in London, told his congregation during the dark days of Dunkirk, and I quoted his statement - "Blessed are those who at midnight are sure of the dawn."

When Allen returned from Mississippi, he sponsored a drive to collect clothing, furniture, and other needed items for the poor in Canton. Thirteen Southern California churches responded with twelve and a half tons of donated items. In January, 1965, this material was shipped by truck--under guard because some trucks going into the South were being burned.

Allen's actions for social justice extended beyond the Southern California region in an attempt to influence denominational views on the civil rights issues. Several of the eight or ten International Convention Resolutions he sponsored were approved by that denominational body.

The sermon "Shared Bread" (given in the First Christian Church of Orange, on March 1, 1970) describes his work with Operation Breadbasket, a department of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Allen was involved in starting the Operation Breadbasket work in Los Angeles. Much of what this organization did was through negotiation with businesses in the ghetto areas to get more jobs for blacks, improve service, encourage black business, and get the white businesses to deposit money in black-owned banks.

Allen sees such involvement in social action by himself, and other clergy, and church members, as a way of carrying out Jesus' mission as read in Luke 4:18-19. "To me this is the gospel in action. To me this is the gospel taken out of the pulpit and put on the city streets" ("Shared Bread").

Preaching to a Changing Congregation

Much has already been written here about the changing nature of the congregation to which Allen preached while at McCarty Memorial Christian Church in Los Angeles. In the interview, I asked him what changes took place in his preaching over the years, especially as the congregation changed from being practically all white to being practically all black.

He answered that essentially the message and emphasis remained the same through the years. Some of the specifics changed. For instance, as the congregation became more black, he may have brought in more concerns related to the Southern California Leadership Conference's goals and activities. The

worship services became more informal and "spiritual," with more gospel hymns, etc.

Blacks have prejudices, too. He tried to preach so that what he said fit the needs and concerns of both races so that both could identify with him and his message. In the 1961 sermon, "Open the Door, Brother," he states:

We can open doors of fellowship. Funny thing about a closed door--such as segregation and discrimination--as it shuts someone out, it also shuts someone in. . . . The Negro and the Anglo white men have been inhabitants of this country for nearly 350 years and yet there are few of either race who really understand and appreciate each other.

This business of fellowship is a two-way street. The Negro needs to avoid self-segregation which is also a type of closed door. There are those of their own race, just as within the Anglo white race, who become victims of class and cast and will have nothing to do with others who are not of their particular economic and social standing.

Both white and Negro need to use every moral and ethical means possible to bring the people of both races and other races and cultures together for fellowship and work.

He emphasized the need for fellowship, understanding, and appreciation for one another within the congregation. At one time the black and white segments of the congregation separated in worship, sitting on different sides of the room. Thus he pushed the leaders of both groups to help get all the people to associate with other races, to go out of their way to demonstrate what the congregation was trying to do as an integrated body. He preached the spirit of togetherness. He took 30 white members and 30 black members to Loch Leven Conference Grounds for a retreat. When they came back they were a cohesive whole.

Although Allen is white, he could easily identify with

the Blacks, and they to identify with him. As time went on he found himself saying "we" with the Blacks. This made an impression on the Blacks. A prominent bishop of a black denomination heard Allen speak. Afterward, the bishop commented "that guy has a black heart." (Allen recounted this to me with pride, feeling that it was a compliment.)

In this category concerning the preacher and his or her audience, we try to determine whether the speaker addresses the hearers as a corporate body or as a group of individual Christians gathered together for worship. Generally, the sermons of Allen analyzed for this study show that when he preaches on the church's responsibilities to work for change in the racial situation, he addresses the corporate body, with implications for individual action. However, the sermons dealing with death and the meaning of faith speak to the individuals to strengthen their personal faith and commitment to God in Christ. In some sermons, it is difficult to distinguish between his message to the body as a whole and to the individual members within it.

Allen's sermons are not so clearly outlined as are the sermons of the previous preachers discussed in this paper. His sermons are long and complex, but much that he says is stated in short, pithy, hard-hitting sayings. He uses many illustrations, listings of facts, scripture passages, anecdotes and irony. He recognizes that

Living in this kind of culture . . . it becomes increasingly difficult to make spiritual values meaningful and vital without the use of metaphors, allegories, parables, and analogies. I am convinced that the reason many people are unable to grasp spiritual concepts and truth is due to the

fact that in much of our preaching, we have failed to use the terminology familiar to our people. ("Thank You, Here's Your Change" a stewardship sermon given on July 11, 1954.)

In this regard, as in other ways, Allen tries to practice what he preaches.

Preaching the "Fatherhood of God"
and the "Brotherhood of Man"

The Brotherhood of man is just the other side of the coin, the Fatherhood of God. You can't have one without the other. These fundamental spiritual truths are forever welded together. The tragedy of our time is that we have tried to separate them. We can never hope to build a brotherly world apart from first making faith in the Fatherhood of God a living, flaming, vital experience.

These words are in the sermon "Thank You, Here's Your Change" which was preached in 1954--before the feminist consciousness of inclusive language began to make an impact on preachers, such as Allen. If we can overlook the sexist terminology, we find the main thrust of much of his preaching. In another sermon, "The Sky Is Red," he expands the phrase to "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man and the Christ as the Saviour who died for all men." Thus he adds his emphasis on faith in Christ who reveals God's all-inclusive love.

Belief and commitment are not enough. In "Victory of Faith" he acknowledges that "we have the capacity for faith but we have to apply it, put it to work, we must act on it." Thus we have another emphasis that appears over and over in his sermons. The church and its members must act, must work to change the situations that need changing, wherever they exist.

A 'one-legged Christian' can talk but not walk. That is part of the scandal of our time. We must walk as we talk,

practice as we pray, perform as we proclaim, and work as we worship (from "The Sky Is Red").

He kept the problem between the races "front and center" in his preaching. He goes on in the sermon "The Sky Is Red" to say:

Think as you will and believe as you must but it is my sincere and deep conviction that the Race Issue, especially as it involves the Negro, is the most important issue on the red horizon of the American sky and the number one item on the agenda of the citizens of the United States.

Allen preaches on the personal concerns of people. He tries to provide a balance and to relate to everyday life. Two of the sermons analyzed for this study illustrate this point: "O Death, Where Is Your Victory?" which he used frequently for memorial services, and "The Victory of Faith" which deals with the meaning of faith and is one of his favorite sermons. However, he acknowledges that he might have neglected personal concerns sometimes because of the social and church situation. Through the years he has sought to make the gospel relevant to all people in the community. He is not so concerned with the past and what might have been as with working in the present for the future. He believes that Jesus gives hope for tomorrow, for a dawn of a new age for the world and for eternal life beyond the grave.

Implications For Preaching That Edifies

Some possible implications for edifying preaching which may be learned from Allen, evangelistic prophet, are:

- the combination of evangelistic fervor and prophetic zeal;

- the three emphases on (1) helping the congregation understand the nature of the church, (2) clearing up false interpretations of the Scriptures, and (3) lifting up aspects of Jesus' life and teachings that show his involvement in issues that hurt people;

- the basic affirmations concerning relationships to God and to all persons as our brothers/sisters and faith in Christ as savior of all;

- the concern that people gain knowledge, not only about their faith and its implications for their personal lives, but also about the social situations in which they live and serve;

- the direct prophetic approach to social situations/issues as seen in his uncompromising attack on racism wherever found, in society and in the church;

- the sharing of a vision--in this case of an integrated church which reaches out to change society;

- the importance of supporting one's vision with concrete facts, suggestions for actions, and personal examples;

- the "practicing of what one preaches" by leading out in courageous, concerned action;

- the emphasis on putting faith into action;

- the willingness to study and research a situation in order to share facts with others and work from an informed base;

- the importance of dealing with people's personal concerns, such as in times of grief and death, as well as with important social concerns;

- an identification with all persons regardless of race,

cultural background, and economic status;

- the ability to minister to all persons in a racially changing congregation;

- an emphasis on relationships within the congregation in order to develop mutual understanding and appreciation and to break down walls of distrust and exclusiveness.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The four categories used for sermon analysis provide the framework for this summary of findings and conclusions regarding the role of preaching in the ministry of edification. What can be learned from the sermon analysis and background research in each of the categories of Purpose, Audience/Congregational Context, Content, and Broad Contextual Relationships?

Purpose

In order for preaching to edify the church, it is essential that the preacher be intentional about his or her preaching task. The preacher should have in mind the purpose for his or her preaching, not only when preparing next Sunday's sermon or when planning sermon themes for an extended period of time, but also when considering the overall function of preaching his or her ministry with the congregation. As the pastoral leader, the preacher should keep in mind what he or she wishes to accomplish through the preached word in relation to what is happening and needs to happen in the congregation's shared ministry as a church of Jesus Christ in today's world.

The purposefulness of the preaching of the four ministers considered in this paper is evident in the sermons analyzed. Savage was the only one to write a statement of purpose at the beginning of each sermon, but the sermons of all four reveal

certain expectations or desired results from their preaching. These range from general concern for the hearers' spiritual growth, through renewed faith and commitment, to specific suggestions for actions and changed attitudes in relation to particular issues.

In an early sermon, Linberg emphasized that the preacher is attempting to speak for God to the people and expects the words spoken to make a difference in the hearers lives. The hearers also have the responsibility to listen with such an expectation in mind. The effects of some preaching may not be seen until much later as ideas that have been planted germinate and grow within the on-going dialogue that takes place between speaker and hearers.

Both Savage and Linberg see their preaching as a teaching tool. Ford and Allen may not have characterized their preaching as such, but they used their sermons to teach. Most of the sermons analyzed were didactic with some proclamatory or kerygmatic characteristics. The nurturing dimension of Ford's sermons is apparent in his concern to help his hearers grow toward the fulfillment of their potentials as children of God and brothers/sisters of others. Allen is concerned that people gain knowledge, not only about their faith and its implications for their lives, but also about the social situation in which they must act out their Christian convictions. The sermons of all four seem to reflect Alexander Campbell's belief that if the facts of the gospel are presented in a rational, logical manner, then the people will respond with appropriate, intelligent

action.

When Linberg was asked how he saw preaching functioning in his total ministry, he stated that through preaching, he tries to: (1) share a vision of the faith and challenge his hearers with the meaning of discipleship in today's world, (2) provide support and encouragement, (3) and give some body (content) to what is said and done, including giving some specific implications and applications.

These three functions summarize much that was said about preaching in the first chapters of this paper and what was discovered in the sermon analysis. Many of the sources in Chapter 2 emphasize the first function in the importance they place on proclaiming and interpreting the Word, especially God's redeeming action in Christ. As the four preachers attempt to do this, their sermons become evangelistic, educative, and prophetic, depending on the situation.

Within Biersdorf's intentional ministry, the minister may use his or her sermons to share a vision of what the church can be and do. Küng indicates that the preacher stimulates and inspires the people, gives them ideas, points to situations to consider, raises the "right questions," and helps them with the "glad and liberating message." The biblical admonition to "speak the truth in love," in order to build up the community, sometimes must take on a prophetic note as the preacher seeks to challenge his or her hearers to examine beliefs and actions in the light of the gospel.

In preaching, the minister may take advantage of

opportunities to proclaim and interpret the gospel in ways that bring new vision and challenge to the congregation in the midst of its planning and struggle to fulfill its shared ministry in the world. If the minister is intentional about this use of his or her sermons, such preaching can fulfill a vital role within the church's ministry of edification. It can contribute greatly to the "equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Many of the sermons analyzed seek in various ways to fulfill the function of sharing a vision and challenging the hearers to examine their corporate and individual lives in its light. Many sermons also offer support and encouragement (the second point). These ministers' pastoral concern for their hearers is expressed in their sermons, as well as in other relationships with them. We also recall Küng's words (as quoted in Chapter 2) in which he stressed the importance of strengthening, consoling, providing help and security, and "gladdening" the hearers with the gospel message. The people may need to be challenged, but they also need to be affirmed in what they are already trying to do, comforted in their times of trouble and weakness, and encouraged to risk following their own visions.

Linberg's third point grows out of the prior two. I think that the other three preachers would agree with him that sermons should be practical. Their sermons provide facts and illustrations, interpret the biblical message in the light of current needs and situations (and vice versa), develop point by

point some implications, and suggest specific applications, actions, and attitudes for their hearers' consideration. Ford usually ends his sermons with a series of suggestions which might be "taken home and applied to daily life." Savage uses the Act of Declaration at the end of the worship service to repeat several specific ways the hearers might follow through on his suggestions during the week. Like Linberg, Allen suggests specific actions that might be taken both within the congregation and in various secular situations.

Allen's sermons reveal how one's preaching may reflect and support the general purposes of a ministry--in this case, in a changing congregation within changing social conditions. Recognizing the importance of the explosive racial situation in Los Angeles and the desirability of integrating his congregation, he set about to learn as much as possible about Black History and the problems facing the minority people in American society. In his sermons he confronted his hearers with the reality of the situation, challenged them to take needed action, and invited all people to join the congregation. He continued to preach and act on his convictions even in the face of criticism and loss of white parishioners.

I began this section with the assertion that the preacher should be intentional about his or her preaching function within the totality of the ministry shared with the rest of the congregation. To do this, the preacher must have a personal vision to share in light of (1) what he/she and the congregation see the church becoming and doing, (2) the needs and concerns of

the hearers, (3) the message/content to be spoken in order to make the gospel relevant to their lives, and (4) the broad context of the social/church/world situation in which the congregation carries out its ministry.

Audience/Congregational Context

Ford's emphasis on people, especially the people whom he addresses in his sermons, is an emphasis that must not be forgotten within the ministry of edification. The preacher who wishes to edify his or her congregation must know the needs, concerns, gifts, and visions of his or her audience, corporately and individually. The preacher, who humbly tries to speak God's Word to those who have come to hear it, does not address it to people in general. He or she seeks to speak to a particular people in a particular place, at a particular time. With few exceptions, the sermons read illustrate this point. The sermons Allen preached over television may be exceptions, but even these were given with particular needs and concerns of people in mind.

Ford speaks to the individuals in his congregation in the light of what he knows about them--"where they are, their needs, their experiences, their need to grow and stretch their minds, hearts, and wills." For him, pastoral preaching and pastoral calling go hand in hand.

Linberg also finds that his pastoral relationships make a difference in his preaching. He is able to speak out prophetically on controversial issues because of the mutual trust, acceptance, and understanding that he shares with his

hearers. He is not speaking to strangers, but to his "fellow ministers" in that congregation, to persons with whom he struggles to find and follow the truth to the best of each one's ability. K'ung, as reported in Chapter 2, identifies the preacher as a seeker among seekers.

The other two preachers, Savage and Allen, also seek to know their parishioners and to speak to them as fellow members of the congregation. Allen spoke of the trust that he needed to develop with Blacks before his dream of an integrated church could begin to be realized. The time came when he identified with them, and they with him.

The ministry of edification described in Chapter 2 takes place best within a pastor-people relationship based on mutual love and trust. A preacher seeking to edify his or her hearers must seek to know them individually and to speak to them as they are, in the hope of sharing with them a vision of what they yet may become.

Most of the sermons read address the hearers as church members who need to grow in knowledge, deepening commitment, awareness of some implications for Christian living in today's society, and motivation to act on convictions. As Disciple ministers, all four preachers probably end their sermons with an "invitation" to non-members to become a part of the particular congregation by confession of faith or transfer of membership. Savage is to be commended for incorporating the weekly issuing of that invitation into his sermon development. Thus, even before he enters the sanctuary, he is alert to the possibility that he

might be speaking to non-members as well as members.

While it is important to be sensitive to the personal and spiritual needs of persons in the congregation, it is also important to be aware of their gifts and visions for ministry. Much was said in Chapter 2 about recognizing and facilitating the development of individual gifts for ministry, and about being open to the insights and strengths that the laity bring to the congregation's shared ministry. Such actions and attitudes are important for the "equipping of the saints for ministry." Besides being conscious of opportunities for such equipping for ministry in the educational, organizational, and service dimensions of the church's life, the pastoral leader also may find ways to use the pulpit as an equipping tool. Sermons may affirm the hearers' roles in ministry, encourage and support the development of their gifts, provide a channel for the sharing of views, and suggest new ways to use their gifts. Some of the sermons analyzed reflect such use of the pulpit. For instance, some deal with the various ministries that the laity, as well as the clergy, may fulfill. Others affirm and give direction to the lay leadership within the congregation.

In speaking to individuals in the congregation, the preacher also may recognize the roles they perform in secular society. In several sermons, Linberg addresses his hearers as United States citizens, challenging them to exercise their patriotic duties in the light of their Christian convictions. If the preacher knows his parishioners as teachers, business leaders, doctors, machinists, farmers, social workers,

housewives, and whatever, he or she might be more sensitive to ways the development of sermons may reflect such knowledge.

Allen was aware of the racial makeup of his congregation and sought to make it more inclusive. One of the quotations from Biersdorf's book emphasized the possible strengths found in the heterogeneous congregation when differences are affirmed and used to develop multiple ministries. Preaching in such a congregation would need to keep this diversity in mind and affirm its strengths, as well as seek to bring unity of the spirit.

In analyzing the sermons, it was determined that many address the congregation as a corporate body and/or suggest ways that individual responses might affect the life and work of the corporate body. For instance, some sermons deal with congregational priorities, decision-making, and organizational concerns. Others are used as opportunities for evaluation and collective dreaming, such as on anniversaries. Others challenge the church to face up to its basic nature as the body of Christ in the world, such as Linberg's "Which Way the Church?" (No. 387). Still others suggest specific ways the corporate body might act in relation to an ecclesiastical or social issue.

Chapter 2 contains a section entitled "The Nature of the Church Being 'Built Up'" which emphasizes the need for the pastoral leader and congregation to develop a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of the church. Preaching may be one tool by which the pastoral leader brings needed information and insight into the "negotiations" (to use Biersdorf's term). He or she may address the congregation in

sermons designed to help it interpret the biblical view of the church and its mission for its own life and work. He or she may determine that some sermons must be used to challenge the church to rethink its present image and priorities, to open its doors to all classes and races of people, to take courageous stands on issues, and to risk acting as a change agent in society.

At other times, the preacher may realize that the congregation needs encouragement in what it is already attempting to do. This role of preaching was mentioned in the previous section. There may be specific congregational anxieties that must be recognized and addressed in sermons.

Just as the preacher must know the members of his or her congregation as individuals, he or she must know what is happening within the corporate body. The preacher does not address the congregation from outside or above it, but from within it, as one intimately involved in its life and struggle to be the church in a particular time and situation.

Before leaving this section dealing with the congregational context of preaching, one other concern needs to be recognized. Whereas preaching may undergird and bring needed vision and direction to other aspects of the congregation's shared ministry--worship, pastoral relations, witness, outreach giving, social action, and so forth--it is also important that these other aspects of ministry be seen as undergirding the preaching. They should provide concrete ways for hearers to express their various responses to that preaching.

The worship context of the preaching should be planned to

provide for congregational responses, such as during the "invitation-commitment" hymn, through the offering, at the Lord's Table, and through litanies and unison statements. Attention also should be given to providing specific ways the hearers might carry out their responses in opportunities of service, study, pastoral calling, action projects, special giving, administrative roles, and so forth. The organizational and fellowship dimensions of the church's life should provide opportunities for congregational feedback and for individual members to find needed support.

Unless there is an intentional effort to build such a reciprocal relationship between preaching and the other dimensions of ministry, the entire ministry of edification may suffer. The hearers may become more frustrated than edified by the preacher's insights and challenges.

Content

Ford was quoted as saying that "all human experience merits consideration under the aegis of worship." Linberg expressed concern for more sermonic balance in stressing both personal faith and public faith, in dealing with both individual concerns and social concerns. It would be impossible to summarize all the ideas, beliefs, and themes included in the sermons analyzed. However, some conclusions may be drawn from the methods used by the four preachers in selecting the themes for their sermons.

Linberg emphasizes the biblical content of his preaching,

preferring "for most of [his] sermon ideas to come out of biblical texts and concepts and make contact with the real world, instead of finding a biblical text or idea to justify an idea which comes to [him]" (Sermon No. 350). He has increased his use of the lectionary but also takes note of special emphases and congregational needs which the lectionary texts may not meet. He plans special series during Lent and Advent. In order to be prophetic when necessary in the light of world and social situations, these also are taken into account in sermon planning. He is seeking for more thematic balance.

Savage characterizes himself as a teaching preacher. He seeks to interpret the biblical message in ways that are understandable and vital for the twentieth century and to lift up particular implications for the hearers' lives in the church and in society. He often works from a general outline of themes to be dealt with during a typical year. These themes include theological concepts, special days and emphases, congregational concerns and goals, personal needs of the hearers, world and social concerns, and implications for the hearers' growth as Christ's disciples/servants.

Ford begins his sermon planning with the needs and experiences of people. He uses biblical texts and the biblical message to support and throw light upon what he believes must be said to his hearers at a particular time and situation. He advises preachers to "pick the plum that is ripest," to discover the "word" that needs to be said. He treats a wide range of specific themes, but the principal, recurring theme has to do

with right relationships with God and others, within the church and in society.

Allen's main content thrusts concern the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and the Christ as the Savior who died for all men." He seeks to be evangelistic about the faith and prophetic about its implications for the social situation. (The social/racial conditions in which he carried on his ministry greatly shaped the specific content of much of his preaching.) He identifies three ways in which he seeks to edify his people: (1) by trying to establish the "true nature of the church" in the minds of the people, (2) by trying to clear up false interpretations of the Scriptures, and (3) by lifting up aspects of Jesus' life and teachings that show his involvement in issues that hurt people. He believes that people must be helped to understand what is revealed through the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This summary also needs to include some of the insights gained from Chapter 2 and 3 that have implications for the selection of sermon content. For instance, attention must be given to the emphasis given there to the proclamation and interpretation of the gospel. All sermon content must be grounded in the biblical message, especially in the good news of God's redeeming action in Christ for all people. Sermons through the centuries have included both kerygmatic and didactic characteristics. (This is true of the sermons analyzed, but they tend to be essentially didactic, building on basic kerygmatic concerns.) The content and form of a sermon should be

appropriate to the preaching situation, the needs of the audience, the sermon's purpose, and the general conditions existing in the church and society.

Preaching that edifies, in the best sense of the word, needs to take into consideration some of the criticism of preaching given in Chapter 3. Didactic preaching can degenerate into being merely moralistic without the proclamatory dimension. The good news of God's grace needs to be present to bring hope along with any words of judgment and challenge for change. (Too many of the sermons I have heard and read seem to lack a sense of joy based on faith in the presence of God, working in the lives of the speaker and hearers.)

The open-endedness and participatory emphases made by Craddock and other writers mentioned in Chapter 3 may bring a needed corrective to the heaviness of the content found in some sermons. The presentation of information, facts, and logical deductions often may be needed, but many of the sermons analyzed seem to rely too heavily on this style of preaching. Linberg discussed some of the changes he is attempting in his preaching which include use of storytelling and becoming more personally involved in his preaching. Savage's sermons use illustrations effectively, as do Allen's. In a sermon given in 1954, Allen already realized some of the insights later emphasized by Craddock and others: "Living in this kind of culture . . . it becomes increasingly difficult to make spiritual values meaningful and vital without the use of metaphors, allegories, parables, and analogies."

Before leaving this section on Content, a few general observations are in order. The selection of sermonic content within the ministry of edification should have a certain intentionality about it. The need for balance is important; however, individual preachers may stress some concerns more than others, depending on his or her own view of preaching.

For balance, the preacher may consider how best to weave together intentionally such diverse "threads" as : (1) the biblical/gospel message; (2) the church year, holidays, and special emphases; (3) congregational goals, needs, strengths, and weaknesses; (4) the needs and experiences of the people; (5) a realistic view of the social/world/universal church context within which, and to which, the church ministers; and (6) the preacher's own faith and experience. To do this, he or she will need to be well informed about each "thread" and seek to bring the insights and concerns of each to bear on all the others--and that of all on each one. As Linberg said in his first sermon at Gateway: "The task of preaching is all but overwhelming when its magnitude is considered."

In the light of this intentional search for balance, the lectionary has its usefulness, but also its limitations. The lectionary provides an excellent means of keeping the biblical message as the primary thread in the sermonic tapestry. Its spread of texts serve to confront the preacher and hearers with aspects of that message that they might not otherwise consider. However, there may be times when particular "threads" need to be considered in such a way as to require the preacher to seek

biblical guidance in passages other than those given in the lectionary.

Broad Contextual Relationships

One content "thread" has been used as a category for the sermon analysis. One reason for this relates to the project's academic field of church history and the desire to discover how the four selected preachers spoke out of and to their historical situation. A second reason relates to the fact that this "thread" is perhaps one of the most difficult to weave into the tapestry. The four preachers approach the task differently.

Allen often takes a direct approach and makes this "thread" the dominant concern of his sermons. His ministry at McCarty Memorial Christian Church in Los Angeles was definitely influenced by the racial segregation and discrimination that existed at that time in the church and society. He demonstrates in speech and action his conviction that the church must be an agent for change in society, as well as needing to change itself. With evangelistic, prophetic zeal, he confronts his hearers with descriptions of the situation and their responsibilities as Christians in relation to that situation. He pulls no punches and stands uncompromisingly for the truth as he sees it.

Linberg also values the prophetic role and is willing to speak out on issues when he considers it necessary in the light of Christian truth (as he sees it). Prophetic preaching can challenge and enable the church to be a prophetic force in society. He sees the importance of both a deep personal faith

and a commitment to radical change in the social order. Some issues he approaches directly, making them the main thrusts of sermons, such as the arms race, the nuclear threat, race relations, and world hunger. Many other social/moral issues, world conditions, events, and problems are mentioned frequently as illustrations and points of concern. He seeks to keep a realistic view of society and the world before his congregation.

Savage emphasizes the need to help the congregation develop a global consciousness. Most of the sermons analyzed reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, this desire to help his hearers relate their faith to the larger world around them. This list of world conditions, social issues and situations, events, and outreach concerns is quite comprehensive. However, unlike some of Allen's and Linberg's issue-centered sermons, most of Savage's sermons (that I read) approach these broader contextual concerns indirectly and generally - with the notable exceptions of world poverty and hunger.

Ford's approach to the broader context of the church's ministry is similar to Savage's. Fewer of his sermons (that I read) deal with social and world concerns than those read of the other four preachers. However, a variety of concerns are used as illustrations for his hearers to consider. He tries to preach from a long-range point of view. Thus he refers to social concerns in a general way in many sermons rather than devoting a few sermons to specific concerns, and trusts that his hearers' social consciousness will grow through the years. All such preaching is done in relation to his continual emphasis on loving all people, everywhere.

The broad contextual relationships considered in this category include those with manifestations of the church beyond the congregation. Most sermonic references to these relationships are connected with the observances of churchwide emphases such as Worldwide Communion Sunday, Week of Compassion, Race Relation Sunday, the Reconciliation offering, and so forth. Missionaries and their work in other lands, outreach giving, and Christian unity are mentioned in the sermons of most, if not all, of the four preachers. Much of the regional activity, reported in the Appendix, is not reflected in these sermons preached during the decades covered. Linberg's sermons provide the most illustrations of intentional efforts to acquaint hearers with regional and denominational events, programs, and emphases.

There seems to be a lack of consciousness on the preachers' part as to why and how to use their sermons as a tool to help their people relate their congregational life to the wider church. Perhaps if the ministry of edification is concerned with the upbuilding of the entire church, and not just congregations, then preachers need to seriously consider the relationship of their sermons to this wider concern.

Concluding Comments

The study of the preaching of four Disciple ministers provides many valuable insights into how these preachers carry out their task of edifying their hearers and building up the church. The four preachers studied do not go about the task in the same way. Each has his particular strengths and weaknesses.

The analysis of each one's sermons results in a different list of implications for edifying preaching. The purpose of this study is not to make judgmental comparisons between the four preaching styles, but rather to learn as much as possible from each one.

What are some general, basic characteristics to look for in edifying preaching (as defined in this study), regardless of variations in individual approaches and emphases?

Heading any list, of course, is the necessity for the preaching to be centered on Christ and rooted in the biblical message. Christ is still the cornerstone in whom the whole structure of the church is joined together (Ephesians 2:20-21).

Second, the preaching contributes to the upbuilding of the Christian community. The ministry of edification emphasizes the importance of loving, supportive relationships within the Christian community. Preaching that edifies contributes to such relationships and encourages persons to grow together as Christ's faithful servants. Thus, it would be difficult to identify as edifying (as interpreted here) preaching that encourages an individualistic, self-serving approach to religion or a withdrawal into exclusive, elitist "religious clubs."

Third, preaching that edifies supports the church's mission in and to the world. The faith it proclaims is inclusive of all people, everywhere. It challenges hearers to put their faith into action in their daily lives. Preaching that encourages congregations to become, or continue to be, like Holmes' "Teahouse on Elm Street" or "introverted church" (Chapter 2) may be less than edifying to its hearers.

Fourth, within the ministry of edification, preaching is seen as an integral part of the church's total ministry and supportive of the various other parts or functions. It recognizes and encourages a shared ministry in which all may participate. Thus, the preacher does not assume an authoritarian, dictatorial stance. He or she enters the pulpit with prayerful humility, as well as with the courage of personal convictions.

Fifth, preaching is more apt to be edifying if it deals with known needs and real life situations of a particular audience than if it just expounds on abstract generalities, directed to "people in general and no one in particular."

Finally, the need to be intentional about one's preaching is one of the main emphases that runs throughout most of the conclusions included in this chapter and is repeatedly stressed elsewhere. The preacher who intentionally seeks to edify his or her hearers and to build up the church carries that intent into purposeful sermon planning, in seeking to know his or her audience, in relating preaching to the congregation's total life and work, in seeking balance in sermon content (by the way various "threads" are woven together), and in relating the hearers to the social/world/churchwide context in which they live.

Preaching as emphasized in this study has a vital role to fulfill in the ministry of edification. One possible visual symbol of this role might be the plumb line to the extent that the Word is proclaimed and interpreted as relevant and true for

the lives and ministry of the hearers, individually and as a congregation. It points to the gospel foundation upon which they build together in order to fulfill their mission as God's servants in the world.

As a plumb line, the preached vision and challenge provides a guide by which the hearers may measure their individual and corporate goals and plans, and find needed direction. It can be used to call them back to rethink ideas and redirect actions. It can become a means by which they can better align the church's work so as to meet the real needs of people and world concerns. It can serve as a starting point from which the hearers may move to discover their own conclusions and implications as "fellow builders" of the house of God.

The carpenter's plumb line can be an important tool in building any structure. Preaching can be an important tool in the upbuilding of the church of Jesus Christ in the world today.

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DENNIS B. SAVAGE
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"Alexander Campbell and the Fourth of July" (July 1, 1973,
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"Meanwhile--Back on Earth" (September 23, 1973)

"Are You a Thermometer Or a Thermostat?" (November 11, 1973)

"Growth in Thanks Giving" (November 20, 1977)

"God and Your Health" (January 14, 1979)

"What About Our Relatives?" (February 18, 1979)

"Finger Dipping--Not Enough?" (March, 18, 1979)

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"An Audience With God" (September 16, 1979)

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"Two Funnels and the Fulness of God" (October 21, 1979)

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"All Kinds of 'Dishes'" (January 20, 1980)

"Dwelling in Beulah Land" (February 17, 1980)

"On the Rocks" (February 24, 1980)

"The 'Our' Power of Easter" (April 6, 1980)

"Chain Reaction" (April 27, 1980)

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"The Church of My Dreams" (June 29, 1980)

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WESLEY P. FORD

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EDWIN C. LINBERG

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KRING ALLEN

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Los Angeles)

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"Open the Door, Brother" (February 12, 1961)

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APPENDIX

TWO DECADES OF STRUGGLE WITH CHANGE¹

The Changing Setting

To characterize the two decades from 1960 to 1980 as a period of change is to understate the case. This study will examine some of the events and emphases which developed during this period in the Pacific Southwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Then, we will look at some ways the church changed, too.

The movement for civil rights took explosive form during the 1960s. The demonstrations, burnings, and marches in the South may have been instrumental in jolting the nation awake to the cry of its oppressed minorities, but Southern California had its own loud, harsh cries for change. There were the Watts Riots in the summer of 1965, followed by other protests by Blacks and others. In 1966, the militant organization, the Brown Berets, was created in response to police brutality. In 1968, thousands of Mexican American students walked out of their East Los Angeles high schools. The plight of the American Indian did not take such obvious signs, but many suffered in the cities from the

¹The historical information presented in this document was researched in order to provide a factual basis for judgments made in relation to category four, "Broad Contextual Relationships," for the sermon analyses used in this project. This historical study of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Pacific Southwest Region from 1960-1980 was prepared in November, 1982, in connection with the class, "Religion on the Pacific Slope."

government's misguided efforts of forced assimilation into American society. By 1970, de facto segregation in schools led to court-ordered busing in Pasadena and later in the Los Angeles School District.

In the grape vineyards and lettuce fields of California the farm workers, too, began to demonstrate, to strike for change. The church's Migrant Ministry had no choice but to get involved.

Then there was the war in Vietnam which radicalized segments of society in Southern California, as well as in the rest of the nation.

This period also was a time of great strides in the area of technology and space exploration which affected Southern California with its Cal Tech, Jet Propulsion Lab, and giant air and space industries. And there was the growing concern about nuclear testing and development.

Within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), much was changing, also. The move to Restructure the "brotherhood" into a responsibly structured church brought change and concern to the Southern California churches. Persons within these churches reacted differently to these many events and emphases taking shape within their ranks and out in society during these two decades, causing new plans, confrontations, misunderstandings, and actions of various kinds.

Changes in Population

During the decades under discussion, the population of

Southern California was shifting with the various ethnic minority segments steadily growing in number. The appearances of bilingual ballots and education are only some signs that California was beginning to recognize the growth of its Hispanic population. The Asian American population was quietly growing, too, almost without the general populace being aware of its rate of increase.

Clifton L. Holland gave these statistics about the situation in 1970

Urban Los Angeles County constitutes one of America's largest population centers, not only of Anglo-Americans but also of various racial and ethnic minorities. Out of the county's seven million population in 1970, over 1.2 million were Mexican Americans, 760,000 were blacks, 150,000 were Orientals, and almost 25,000 were American Indians. While nearly 100,000 whites moved out of the county between 1960 and 1970, over 900,000 new minority residents were added²

The census figures for 1960 give some indication of the growth that had taken place in the ten years prior to Holland's statement. In 1960, the total population of Los Angeles County was 6 million, with 5.4 million whites, 460,000 Negroes, and 123,000 others. Included in the white figure were 577,000 persons with Spanish-surnames (natives and foreign born).

By 1980, the census figures reflected the growth in racial and ethnic minorities. In Los Angeles County, the total population was now almost 7.5 million, with the white population having decreased slightly to about 5 million, but this apparently

²Clifton L. Holland, The Religious Dimension of Hispanic Los Angeles, A Protestant Case Study (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974) p. 71.

included 2 million persons of Spanish origin. The number of Blacks had increased to 944,000. The Indian population had grown to 48,000. Asians and Pacific Islanders were listed as 435,000, and other racial groups as 977,000. In the entire state of California in 1980, there were listed 18 million whites, including 4.5 million persons of Spanish origin, 1.8 million Blacks, 201,000 Indians, 1.3 million Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 2.4 million others.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

After this brief look at the general setting for our study of the church in the 1960-1980 period, we need to give some background and statistics about this body of Christians known now as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Pacific Southwest Region.

Geographical Area

The area or region with which we are concerned is basically that which is south of an imaginary line drawn across California from Paso Robles on the West, past Bakersfield in the Central Valley, and east to Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1978, the line was extended west into the Pacific to include the islands of Hawaii.

A Brief Historical Sketch

The first Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) established in this southern area was in Downey in 1869, followed

by one in San Bernardino in 1872. Between 1869 and 1900, 32 churches were established which were still in existence in 1959 when Clifford A. Cole wrote his history of the Christian Churches of Southern California.

At first, the members of these churches gathered in camp meetings, with families coming and pitching their tents for protracted sessions of preaching and fellowship. In 1881, the elders of the Downey church and its pastor sent out a call, inviting

all the friends of our Lord Jesus Christ who earnestly desire to worship as the early Christians worshipped to meet with the Church of Christ worshipping at Downey City, August 16th, 1881. The object of the meeting being to promote the cooperation of the Disciples of Christ in this section and proclaim the "good news" to the world.³

These camp meetings, which later became carefully planned state conventions, were held regularly in the years ahead, growing into great mass gatherings in the early 1900s. They continued until the decades which are the concern of this paper.

By 1890, a state organization or committee was formed and called the Evangelizing Board with responsibility to direct the work of appointed evangelists and raise funds to support evangelistic work. In 1904, the Christian Missionary Society of Southern California and Arizona was chartered. However, the responsibility for Arizona was soon relinquished. This organization was composed of:

³Clifford A. Cole, The Christian Churches of Southern California (Authorized by the State Convention of Christian Churches, 1959) p. 42.

co-operating individual Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches and Churches of Christ whose purpose shall be to carry out the Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ and to foster and establish Christian Churches and Churches of Christ in the territory known as Southern California.⁴

Its purpose included: to secure houses of public worship, prepare and circulate materials, assist churches where necessary, and "to send and procure and provide means for sending brethren and sisters to preach and teach the gospel and to do general missionary work."⁵

During the first five decades of this century, this State Society established many churches, held outstanding State Conventions and participated in the establishment of such units or agencies of the church as Chapman College, California Christian Home for the Aged, All Peoples Christian Center and Avalon-Carver Community Center. Other organizations which came into being in the 1950s or 1960s included Disciples Homes Corporation (1958), Churchman's Foundation (1959) which financed and built low-income housing for the elderly, Disciples Seminary Foundation (1960) and Eastmont Community Center (1967). Camp and conference grounds were secured at Loch Leven and Bethany Pines.

All did not go smoothly during these decades of growth. Friction developed between churches with differing viewpoints as to how to carry out the "Brotherhood's Restoration Plea" in the 20th century. In time the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ established according to the State Society's above purpose

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁵Ibid., p. 85.

became divided into "cooperative" churches, which supported the work of the State Society and of the United Christian Missionary Society on a national and international level, and "independent" churches which did not support this cooperative work. This paper concentrates on the cooperative work and those churches that chose to support it and be listed in the State directory and denominational Year Book.

What's In a Name?

Changes in the By-Laws of the state organization in the decades of 1960-1980 may not seem significant on the surface, but signal changes in the body's understanding of itself.

During changes in 1960-61, the organization dropped references to the name Christian Missionary Society and began using simply the name Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) of Southern California. The membership of this corporation was defined as being

composed of the Southern California and Clark County, Nevada, Assembly delegates elected by the churches and representatives of the agencies committed to the cooperative program of the Brotherhood known as the International Convention of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ).

Thus the state conventions became delegate assemblies, rather than just mass meetings which all members of Christian Churches attended and voted. The plan was that beginning in 1963, assemblies of just voting delegates would meet on the even-numbered years, and on the odd-numbered years, there would be full assemblies with aspects of the meetings which would be for everyone. Even in the full assemblies, voting was restricted

to the elected delegates. But this scheme was amended even before it got into full operation. District Assemblies came into prominence with a plan for alternating yearly with the full assemblies.

In 1965 the name of the corporation was again changed to Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) of Southern California and Southern Nevada to give a clearer recognition to Nevada constituents.

Then, in 1969 a major change took place in the corporation's name. In light of the concept of church given in the adopted "Provisional Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" within the Restructure of the denomination, the organization became the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Southern California and Southern Nevada. The small change from the plural, Churches, to the singular, Church, signaled a big change from the state organization as an association of separate congregations or their delegates to a Regional manifestation of the church.

The following statement from The Design gives some insight into the meaning of this shift in self-understanding as church:

Within the whole family of God on earth, the church appears wherever believers in Jesus Christ are gathered in his name. Transcending all barriers within the human family such as race and culture, the church manifests itself in ordered communities of disciples bound together for worship, for fellowship and for service, and in the varied structures for mission, witness and mutual discipline, and for the nurture and renewal of its members. . . .

Within the universal body of Christ, the Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) manifests itself organizationally in free and voluntary relationships at congregational, regional and general levels. Each manifestation, with reference to the function for which it is uniquely responsible, is characterized by its integrity, self-government, authority, rights and responsibilities.⁶

The last major name change took place in 1978. The area designation was enlarged to include the three churches on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. The name is now the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Pacific Southwest Region.

Besides name changes, the region's records indicate other revisions of its By-Laws. A change in 1964 reflected a growth in the concept of the state office's churchly role and of the functions of its staff. Until that time, the senior staff person was entitled Executive Secretary and the other staff members had related designations. In order to "reflect the theological stance that sees the 'church as mission' rather than 'church as organization,'" the Executive Secretary became the Executive Pastor and the other staff persons became General Pastors. The only staff persons whose title was not changed was that of the Administrative Secretary who had business responsibilities. In 1969 the General Pastors became Associate Pastors. Later, the Executive Pastor became the Regional Pastor.

James Parrott was Executive Secretary/Pastor from 1956 to 1967. Charles Malotte became Executive Pastor in 1968 and still holds the position of Regional Pastor.

⁶A Provisional Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as adopted at Kansas City, Missouri, 1968, and amended 1969, 1971, p. 6.

The region's Board of Directors experienced structural changes, too. In the early 1960s it was a comparatively small board that met bi-monthly. A 1961 document listed the board as comprising 21 laymen, 16 laywomen, and 25 clergy, plus staff, and agency representatives. However, in 1968, the By-Laws were revised so that the Board of Directors expanded to include a possible 200-250 persons, although attendance was usually less than 150. Every congregation was represented by the senior minister and board chairman. In addition, districts took on importance with the presidents of the eight districts on the Board, plus three women from each district. Then, there were the presidents of the Christian Women's Fellowship and Christian Men's Fellowship, the chairmen of departments and committees of the area organization, and agency representatives. This mammoth-sized Board met only twice a year. The on-going decision-making function was carried out by an Executive Committee of about 50 persons.

The Board structure was changed in 1975 to return to a small board that again met bi-monthly. Now there are about 40-50 members, with the majority elected by the assembly to be representative of geographical and ethnic concerns and proportionately ministers, laymen, laywomen and youth.

Although all these changes in name and structure may be confusing to persons not closely involved in the workings of the Christian Church on the regional level, they are attempts by the region to become more responsible in its role, function, and image in relationship to congregations and to the general

manifestations of the church. They reflect a growing understanding of the meaning of church beyond the local congregational manifestation and the shared mission in the world.

These changes caused some concern to certain congregations in the region. In particular, Restructure according to The Design (above) pushed some churches with independent leanings "over the brink" so that they withdrew their names from the Regional Directory and the denominational Year Book.

Congregations in the Region

A listing of Christian Churches in Southern California prepared in October, 1960 gave 127 congregations in the eight districts, including southern Nevada.

The Regional Directory prepared for the 1981-82 year, listed 124. At first glance, there does not seem to be much change but that is a false impression. During the time span between these two listings, several new churches were established or recognized as qualifying for listing; several churches withdrew as they moved into the "independent" fold; there were mergers, such as between Avalon and East 28th St. in Los Angeles to form the United Christian Church and, in Pasadena, the joining of Bethany and First Christian; there were splits such as that which created Faith Christian in Los Angeles; and some churches found it necessary to disband for one reason or another. An examination of intermediate listings for 1965-66, 68-69, 70-71, 73-74, for instance, revealed differences in each directory with

congregations being added, others subtracted, and some even disappearing and reappearing on various lists.

One church recognized by the Regional Board in 1973 had a tragic ending. The People's Temple, earlier recognized as a Christian Church in Northern California, established a branch congregation in Los Angeles. When this church requested that its affiliation be recognized, an investigation indicated some unusual characteristics. However, the Board minutes record that recognition was approved without a dissenting vote. Then, in the fall of 1978, word came of the mass suicides and murders in Jonestown, Guyana. Shock and disbelief spawned such questions as: How could we become associated with such a group? Why had the People's Temple been recognized by the Region? Didn't anyone suspect anything?

An emergency resolution brought to the Regional Assembly, meeting in Orange, November 30-December 2, extended compassionate Christian concern for all affected by the tragedy and disclaimed any involvement in the tragic events in Guyana. Information presented revealed a lack of knowledge, regionally or nationally, about the Guyana colony and little appreciation for the fanaticism that led to the deaths there. The Los Angeles outpost of the Northern California People's Temple had been practically inoperative for about two years although money had been received from it for the Region's Reconciliation program.

In a "Pastoral Letter," Dr. Kenneth L. Teegarden, General Minister and President of the Christian Church, explained that

Under our church polity, it is neither possible, nor has it been desirable to conduct investigations of the activities or ministries of local congregations. We have stood firmly for a variety of styles and approaches to Christian mission and ministry. . . .

In a document entitled, "The Acts of the Area Church, 1956-67," it was reported that in that 10 year span, 23 new congregations were established. Ten of those were in the decade of the 1960s; San Luis Obispo (1960); Hillside, San Bernardino (1960); Grossmont, Santee/San Diego (1961); Bakersfield University (1962) which withdrew later; Poway (1962); El Segundo (1963); Yucaipa (1963); Upland (1964); Church of the Cross, Santa Maria (1965) that later disbanded; and Leisure World (1966). These ten marked the last of any significant drive to establish new churches during the two decades under discussion in this paper. A few were established or recognized as being affiliated after 1966 but these were not usually initiated by the regional organization in a new church campaign. An effort was made to start a church in Irvine in cooperation with the United Church of Christ and the Baptists, but this did not materialize. A new church emphasis began to grow in the late 1970s and a new campaign has been launched in the 1980s.

As the congregations in this region enter the new decade of the eighties, how do they feel about themselves? At the 1982 Regional Assembly, the Ethnic Urban Strategy Committee reported that ninety-six congregations responded to a questionnaire sent to all the churches in the region. The response indicates a somewhat realistic evaluation, tempered by some hopefulness;

Sixty-six (66) of our congregations are located in communities in transition, and fifty-nine (59) churches felt

they were also in transition. Thirty-five (35) congregations considered themselves weaker than they were ten (10) years ago, twenty-seven (27) stronger, with twenty-four (24) retaining stability. Projections for the next ten years resulted in the majority feeling that they would be stronger (57), with the possibility of a few (10) becoming weaker and the balance (17) remaining stable.

Twenty-two (22) of our congregations share their building with twenty-seven (27) other worshipping groups. Sixty (60) of the congregations shared their building with other agencies, groups, schools, etc.⁷

This report also indicated that the last decade has demonstrated a 20% membership loss in the Christian Church in the Pacific Southwest Region with a constantly increasing dollar support base for local and world ministries. The task force saw this as an indication that our decline has produced a strengthened commitment on the part of our active membership.

The decline membership and increase in giving mentioned above is reflected in the following statistics found in a comparison of the 1960, 1970-71 and 1980 Year Book listing for this Region. (I have rounded the figures by thousands).

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970-71</u>	<u>1980</u>
Participating membership	59,000	38,000	27,000
Non-participating	7,000	14,000	10,000
Additions by baptism/transfer	7,000	3,000	2,000
Outreach giving to Brotherhood causes	\$624,000	\$732,000	\$814,000
Per Capita giving to outreach	\$13.32	\$20.65	not given

⁷Report in documents for 1982 Regional Assembly at Pomona, California.

Ethnic Make-up of Congregations in the Region

The majority of congregations in the Pacific Southwest Region are predominantly Anglo in membership. Many, like my own Pasadena congregation have a few Blacks, Asians, and perhaps Hispanics on their rolls. A few might have a good mixture of persons with different ethnic backgrounds. All People Christian Church in Los Angeles and Delhaven Christian Church in La Puente might be considered examples of such a mixture, but I do not have concrete facts to back up that impression. Then, we have some congregations that are predominantly one ethnic group or another.

The Filipino Christian Church in Los Angeles had its beginnings in 1928. All Peoples Christian Church has its roots in the Japanese Christian Institute, begun as early as 1909, but changed when the Japanese were removed to relocation centers during World War II. When they moved back, they settled in another part of the city. The Japanese congregation is now the West Adams Christian Church.

The Fuente de Vida Church in Gardena was recognized as a Spanish-speaking congregation at the 1980 Regional Assembly. Other attempts to minister to Hispanics no longer are listed in the Regional Directory. In 1960, the denominational Year Book indicated that Hollenbeck Heights Christian Church in Los Angeles was Spanish or Mexican. The Corporate Christian Parish in Ontario was established in the barrio there. It was recognized as a Christian Church and listed in the 1970-71 Directory, but it is no longer included in regional listings. Sam Alaniz became the pastor of the Eagle Rock Christian Church in order to assist

that congregation in ministering to the surrounding area which had become 30% Mexican American. However, that church has disbanded. Of course, Eastmont Community Center ministers to the Hispanic population in East Los Angeles, but is not listed as a worshipping congregation.

The 1981-82 Directory lists three Korean congregations meeting in the First Christian Church of Gardena, Wilshire Christian in Los Angeles, and the Pico Arlington Christian Church in Los Angeles. All of these may not consider themselves Disciple congregations, however. They may be of other denominational affiliation, meeting in our buildings.

Eight Black congregations are listed in 1981-82. The seven Los Angeles congregations are Antioch Christian, Faith Christian, McCarty Memorial Christian, 30th Street Christian, 92nd St. Christian, 105th Street Christian, and United Christian. The eighth congregation is the Lynwood First Christian Church. Both the McCarty Memorial and the Lynwood Churches were once predominantly Anglo, and intentional programs were developed to serve the surrounding community which eventually resulted in predominantly Black congregations.

The 1982 Report of the Ethnic Urban Strategy Committee (referred to above) indicated that its analysis demonstrated that we have four basic existing situations about which it is concerned:

1. Minority congregations that have grown out of historic Anglo-congregations.
2. Multi-racial congregations that have emerged when ethnicity of neighborhoods changed.

3. Historic congregations that housed or shared facilities with distinctly ethnic congregations.
4. Majority congregations that are surrounded by ethnic or multi-ethnic neighborhoods.⁸

The Committee's analysis of major obstacles that impair success included the historic stance of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) which has pushed the integration of minority persons as members of a majority church. Lack of trained leadership and community awareness were other obstacles. Intentionality in ministering to all persons is essential.

SHIFTING EMPHASES DURING THE TWENTY YEARS

The Years of Great Expectations (1960-1964)

The national theme for the 1960s was Decade of Decision. The 1960 State Assembly accepted the goal of 100 new churches to be established in the 1960s. This ambitious program was called New Church Advance. Earlier I listed the 10 churches established from 1960 to 1966, two of which were no longer listed later in the decade. That is barely a 10% achievement of the goal.

That 1960 Assembly also voted to develop a major strategy for ministering to the inner city by attempting to establish one new church per year in an urban area. The state organization set up an Urban Church Department to implement this goal. The department also was given responsibility for assisting the maintenance of existing churches in urban areas. In 1961, the

⁸Ibid.

United Christian Missionary Society in Indianapolis was asked to study the possibility of establishing an interracial Christian Church Center, perhaps using the former dormitories of Chapman College on Vermont Avenue. Later concern for witnessing to the "large group of Mexican descent" was expressed, recognizing that "so far the Christian Church has been pretty meaningless in its witness."

Another goal of the Decade of Decision accepted by the area church was for congregations to achieve 50/50 giving--giving as much for outreach (others) as for local program. During the decade, several churches were commended for reaching 30 to 36 percent in outreach giving. However, frequent reports in the area paper, "Viewpoint," commented on extensive building programs undertaken by many congregations during these years. These building programs may partially explain why their 50/50 goals were not met.

The decade was begun with great expectations, but an article in the February, 1963, issue of "Viewpoint" indicated what happened.

In 1960 we marched starry-eyed into our "Decade of Decision" with a ten-year plan unequal for magnificent goals and enough verbal faith to reach them four times over. We awaken in the third year of our allotted time to find that we are not meting out determination with the same generous hand we used to measure desire.⁹

The article went on to explain the recently completed plans for

⁹James Parrott, "If Wishes Were Horses," Christian Viewpoint 3:7 (February 1963) 1.

a "United Capital Campaign" which was designed to raise \$250,000 over a three-year period.

Building new churches was not the only concern during the early years of the 1960s. Evangelism was emphasized. Bayne Driskill was invited to conduct an area-wide comprehensive evangelism crusade. Out of this crusade grew the All Church Evangelism program or ACE which figured prominently in area plans in the years ahead.

Also leadership development was considered important. Training sessions entitled Powerful Christian Leaders Consultations were held to deal with the nature and mission of the church and to pinpoint the Decade of Decision. Leaders were admonished to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the church in the 20th century in the hard light of realism. Key Leader Labs were held. Clergy and laity alike were involved in this leadership thrust.

The worship and spiritual dimensions were not overlooked. Annual Spiritual Life Conferences were held. One of the major program opportunities listed for 1964-65 was an "Inner Mission to Ministers." The "Invitation to Adventure" Series, authored by Dennis Savage, was initiated. This 10 week session course was to enrich the spirit and sensitivity of church leaders. As the area church approached the mid-decade, concern for liturgical renewal was expressed. This resulted in an extensive program which continued into the early 1970s.

As the area church entered the 1960s, its Social Action and Community Service Department was aware of crucial social and

world problems and tried to awaken the churches to face them. In 1961, it held district workshops on some of these problems. In 1962, a "Viewpoint" article "Cry of the City" explained the need for volunteers to give leadership to troubled youth in the inner city through an ecumenical program involving Community Houses at which the youth gathered. In 1963, a letter was sent to ministers and congregations concerning basic human rights and included a questionnaire. Questions were asked concerning discrimination in housing, employment, and use of public facilities; segregated schools; treatment of minorities by law enforcement agencies; and the church's own openness to all persons. In November, 1964, a Consultation on the Mission of the Church in Community Service has led with leaders from the community. Barton Hunter of the national Social Concerns Department served as resource person.

Various other communiques to the churches emphasized the Migrant Ministry, Cuban Refugee resettlement, integration and racial prejudice, world hunger, and the problems being caused by anti-communistic extremism. At one point, area leaders were seeking "ways to respond to attacks on ministers as being sympathetic to communism." The National Council of Churches was under attack as having communistic leanings.

The Social Concerns Department came out against a state proposition known as the Louis Francis Amendment, because this anti-communistic initiative threatened the American traditions of freedom and justice. Another state initiative opposed by the department reopened the door to racial discrimination in housing.

Regional records show that concern for social problems was not just centered on California, but also on the civil rights movement gaining momentum elsewhere. In October 1963, the area's Board of Directors voted to promote a Special Civil Rights Offering called "Concern." This \$300,000 national emergency fund was for an enlarged denominational program in behalf of moral and civil rights. It was to express concern for persons who faced unusual hardships as a result of their stand in the national crisis. Nationally, the church was losing financial support for mission enterprises because of denominational leaders' pronouncements and demonstrations for the rights of all citizens. The fund would provide some measure of relief for persons who had lost jobs because they had sought their constitutional right of registering to vote. The Board of Directors also sent a letter to ministers, requesting that they write Congressmen on behalf of the President's Civil Rights Bill.

A check of Assembly resolutions indicates that persons in the area church were concerned also about such issues as problems of alcoholism and use of narcotics, need for cleaner entertainment on television and in films, a call for the cessation of nuclear weapon testing and for the establishment of governmental radiation testing stations, disarmament, the need for educating youth about alternative service possibilities related to the draft, the desirability of more human relation training for law enforcement officers, and an emphasis on religious training in the home and church in light of the Supreme Court's ruling on prayer in schools.

The great expectations for new church establishment with which the Christian Churches of Southern California entered the 1960s perhaps had to be reviewed in the light of their mission in a society in the midst of rapid change. Perhaps instead of being discouraged or too critical of goals not met, the churches in the area were being called to consider using their limited resources for other purposes. While not neglecting the building up of the church, especially in relation to leadership development, the churches needed to respond to the cries for help coming from segments in the society surrounding them. Not all members of the churches may have heard this call for a shift in priorities, but certainly the records show that some leaders did. Of course, any such shifting could not come quickly.

The Explosive Year (1965)

The Board Minutes, "Viewpoint" articles, and "Minister's Mailing" packets of 1965 indicate that the year began with a continuation of many of the emphases and plans of earlier years. New Church Advance was seeking ways to help new and existing churches. The liturgical renewal was getting underway under the leadership of the Worship Department. Various Christian Education training events were announced. The Christian Men's Fellowship was holding a rally on "Christianity's Answer to Communism." A Lay School of Theology was announced for the summer in connection with the Disciples Seminary Foundation. The Foundation was in a building program with new facilities to be dedicated that fall. The Ecumenical Relations Department planned

for November a series of meetings on church union with Dr. George Beazley, President of the Council on Christian Unity. The Santa Monica Christian Towers were being developed to provide independent living units for older adults. The Executive Pastor, James Parrott, was preparing to take an extended vacation in connection with training sessions in Human Relations at Bethel, Maine.

However, records also show that new concerns were worrying some church leaders. In March, Parrott gave a special report on Selma in response to inquiries from ministers about going to Alabama to witness as clergy in the racial crisis. The Board of Directors voted \$2,125 to support the program "Ashes to Brotherhood" for the rebuilding of burned churches in the nation's South. In June, "Viewpoint" carried an article by Regional staff member, E. Dean Canady, "I Marched in Alabama."

In August, the Watts Riots jolted Southern California. When Parrott returned from his trip across the country, he wrote in the "Minister's Mailing," "I traveled the less troubled half of the United States. The riots in Los Angeles occurred while I was in Augusta. But now I sense the complexity of our opportunity of being a servant church in the Southland."¹⁰

The Board of Directors reviewed Ian McCrae's report, "Reactions After a Riot," which emphasized the responsibilities of churches to be in touch with persons in the inner city. A letter of concern was sent to the Los Angeles Board of Education.

¹⁰Regional Minister's Mailings," September, 1965.

In November, the churches were sent a "proposal to Churches in Interracial Understanding."

The September-October issue of "Viewpoint" carried a lead article entitled simply, "Riot." Mrs. Bessie Crenshaw was asked to write her reaction "as a Negro." She was the head of the Christian Action and Community Service Committee of United Christian Church, the prominent black congregation in Los Angeles. She expressed shock, some realistic views of the causes, and recognition that the Christian community had been derelict. The magazine's editor expressed the opinion that the riot should not be viewed as a race riot so much as a class conflict between "have-nots" and "haves." It was also reported that two Negroes, Dexter Cleaver of United Christian Church and Ivan Baldwin of All Peoples Christian Church, talked to white churches about the riots.

But inner city conflict was not the only pressure to be felt by the church in the years ahead. Farther north in Delano, Cesar Chavez, head of the National Farm Workers Association, called a strike against grape growers. That event, too, would have repercussions which would affect the church's response to its mission in society.

The cry of minorities and others in response to injustice, discrimination, poverty, and despair was being heard in California, and would continue to be in the years ahead. The wheels of the church's organizations began to grind slowly to develop ways to respond to the cry.

Envisioning a "Teaching-Servant" Stance (1966-1970)

The term "Teaching-Servant" symbolizes two thrusts

envisioned in the plans formulated under the leadership of the Area Church. The term itself is used in a document, marked "tentative," prepared by the area staff as "A Program of Action, 1967-1975." It emphasized the teaching responsibility of the church.

The servant emphasis, although expressed in the goal of the "Program of Action," actually found concrete expression in the establishment of an Urban Crisis Task Force and a new area staff position, Urban Coordinator.

Although the preparation of the "Program for Action" must have taken a great deal of staff time and energy in 1966 and 1967, as well as their dedication to it, I found no evidence that this very elaborate program was ever adopted as such by the Area Church. A portion of its implementation section was approved at the 1967 Regional Assembly in the form of a resolution entitled, "The Teaching Responsibility of the Area Church." Plans were made for training seminars and interpretive visits to congregations. At least one leadership development course, "Training for Mission," was written in order to help ministers and key leaders of congregations become teaching-servants. The staff stated that this teaching responsibility of the church should encourage a 90 degree change in attitudes by church leaders as they plan for events. What was the proposed "Program of Action for 1967-1975"?

The program was too long and complicated to be explained fully, but a few statements might be enlightening. It began with the introduction:

The fervent hope of Christians is to win the world for Jesus Christ. Yet in today's shrinking of church rolls and stretched budgets, the church is not sure of its own ability to stay in business. The staff . . . takes seriously their responsibility to meet the present church crisis with a positive program of action. The following design will bring new life to the Area Church and its local congregations.¹¹

The staff saw the need for the Area Church to reinforce each clergyman to become an effective leader through continuous education, to simplify organizational structures, strengthen the financial base of the local and Area Church, develop an influential teaching community at the center of the churches' life, and equip the laity to witness courageously.

The design describes the Church in terms of its Mission, its Teaching, its Witness, and its Administration, as these are related to the established entities of the Area Church, the Clergy, the Laity, and the existing congregation.¹²

In developing the program in relation to all these aspects of the church, the Area Church would take on a more significant role in the whole scheme than commonly taken; the districts would be headed by paid staff, called Deans; the clergy would reclaim the role of "teaching elder;" the laity would be trained as teachers in an elaborate series of courses over a three-year period; and congregations would become teaching centers. There would be a consolidation of stewardship education and campaigns. The conference grounds would become a major teaching center for the church. Curriculum for all ages and segments of the church would be written. The minister would be

¹¹"Program of Action, 1967-1975" - Tentative - for Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) of Southern California-Nevada.

¹²Ibid.

the executive leader and teacher of the congregation with the chairman as second in command. These are only a few of its proposals which if implemented would have meant a radical reorientation of all levels of regional life. It ended with this statement:

Releasing 40,000 well-trained teacher-servants into Southern California Society can bring a new day in communicating the age-old gospel to a hungry, frightened and waiting people. The Christian Church must provide this message of good news in the next 10 years. It has no other choice.¹³

This "Program for Action" was visionary, and the church needed such, and still does. The church faced a crisis in society and in its need to respond. Whether the proposed program would have brought new life and vitality to the church is impossible to know. Perhaps it was too elaborate and proposed too radical a change in structures, roles, and viewpoints to be accepted. When I came on the scene in the 1970's, it had practically faded from memory. Most of the area staff had changed, so that its creators were no longer there to implement it. It may have been an idea whose time had not yet come.

An idea whose time had come was a "Program of Action in the Urban Emergency" announced in the Spring of 1968. The church's response to the urban crisis had been taking place in a variety of ways before then. For instance, Eastmont Community Center came into existence in February, 1967. An examination of Board minutes, the "Minister's Mailings," "Direction" issues (the replacement for "Viewpoint"), reveal some of what was going on.

¹³ibid.

Congregations were studying the issues, using such resources as the Kerner Report prepared for President Johnson, and getting involved in programs related to Fair Housing, Operation Breadbasket, tutoring, and support of community service agencies.

In the spring of 1968, immediate and long-range strategies were developed and implemented. A significant action was the hiring of Dennis Short as Urban Coordinator. His monthly "Urban Reports" in the "Minister's Mailing" and articles in "Direction" kept the issues and actions before the churches. He led the way in involving the Christian Church of Southern California in cooperative action with other denominations in an organization first known as JMSAC - Joint Metropolitan Strategy and Action Coalition.

To just give a glimpse of the range of work reported by Short, the following were mentioned in the December, 1969 issue of "Direction" as some work supported by the Reconciliation Fund: All Peoples Christian Center, Operation Breadbasket, Rubidoux Economic Opportunity Center, renovation of homes in Watts, GPM - Metro Summer Ministry in San Diego, Fish Market Community Center in the Ontario barrio, COMMIT - Center of Metropolitan Mission in Service Training, Operation Second Chance in San Bernardino, PACE - Positive Action Through Community Effort, Eastmont Community Center, Beach Ministry, "Catacombs" in Ventura, St. Stephens Group House in San Diego, and JMSAC.

When Short resigned from the Regional Staff in 1975, he wrote some reflections about his work. The following appeared in "Direction," June, 1975.

I fondly remember the Urban Crisis Task Force. This group was essentially the Metropolitan Ministers, and Larry Hixon [Eastmont] and Tom Norwood [All Peoples]. Under the Chairmanship of Myron Cole, this group and others of you pushed the Region to get involved in urban ministries. Consequently, when the International Assembly in 1968 decided to get involved with Reconciliation ministries, our Region was the first to be involved in a full-blown campaign. We began under the guidance of Don Reisinger and Bill Parcy [sic]. Because of your continued commitment to social justice, we have raised an average of \$40,000 a year for Reconciliation ministries. . . .

In 1969 the Urban Crisis Task Force was phased out and the Urban Life Committee came into being. Under the Chairmanship first of Dr. Kring Allen of McCarty Memorial, then Jim Reed of Corporate Christian Parish, and now Morgan Sly of Pomona First, this committee has both allocated Reconciliation dollars and served as the social concerns committee of the region. The relationships I've had within this committee have meant much to me as we've struggled to keep issues of social justice before the churches in the region.¹⁴

Of course, the Region's interests and programs during the closing years of the 1960s included much more than has been mentioned. For instance, the war in Vietnam and the United Farm Workers efforts received attention at least in Assembly Resolutions and position papers in various mailings to the churches.

In 1968, the region held a Celebration in the Anaheim Convention Center to celebrate the provisional constituting of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Before that climactic meeting, the assemblies, congregations, and other groups studied the various Restructure documents and sent

¹⁴Dennis W. Short, "Reflections on the 7-Year Itch," Direction 8:10 (June 1975) 1.

reactions to those preparing the "Provisional Design."

Examination of various records reveal that the liturgical renewal efforts resulted in many papers, dealing especially with liturgical expressions often overlooked by the Free Church; there was study of COCU documents and the promotion of Living Room Dialogues with Roman Catholics; Chapman College instituted its "Seven Seas" floating campus; the Christian Education Committee held regular training opportunities for youth leaders and children's workers, curriculum studies, and skill workshops; a young adult ministry was begun; and concern was expressed for family life, work with youth, and ministry to senior citizens.

The 1960s began under the banner "Decade of Decision." Those who selected that theme probably had little idea how decisive the decade would become or of the crises that would call for decisions. In the Southern California Region, the Christian Church turned toward the new decade with a new name, a new Regional Pastor, Charles Malotte, and several new staff persons. It was seeking to respond to the Urban Crisis and to the needs of persons inside and outside the church. Not all agreed on what should be done, but in general, it seemed to be a hopeful, concerned church as it set out to meet the challenge of the future.

Organizing on Issues and Emphases (1971-1974)

The regional leaders were leading the churches in a growing awareness of a broad spectrum of issues in society and emphases within the church's life. In order to give leadership

in these areas, various attempts were made to give organizational structure to felt concerns.

The Regional Disciple Peace Fellowship was organized in 1971 in relation to the National Disciple Peace Fellowship. Not all the protests and actions taken during these years concerning the War in Vietnam came from this organization, but it made an effort to keep the issue before the churches. During the fall of 1971, the Executive Committee of the Region endorsed the concept of "set a date" for withdrawal from Vietnam and voted to support an interreligious campaign to end the war, referring these actions to the congregations for study and decision. The 1972 and 1974 Regional Assemblies had several resolutions each on anti-war themes, including support of amnesty and opposition to the B-1 Bomber. In 1973 Dr. Malotte urged leaders to hold services of Thanksgiving and Penitence for cease-fire when and if achieved. A telegram was sent to the President and California Senators calling for a cease-fire. Congregations were urged to do the same.

A Joint Ecology Task Force came into being in relationship to the growing realization that ecology, too, was an issue about which the church must become concerned. A 1972 conference was called "Prophetic Alternatives to Catastrophe." In 1974 much was written about the theme "Global Consciousness and Human Development." World Hunger was a growing concern. One catchy theme was "eat less, waste less, and share food with the starving."

The region had not forgotten its commitment to finding

ways to cope with the urban crisis. Project Understanding was developed as a means of confronting the churches with white racism in its institutional forms, including in the church. In 1970, an experiment directed by the School of Theology at Claremont, trained 10 interns in 5 regional churches. Records were not clear about what happened in all these churches, but Temple City's and Ventura's Projects continued to be supported by Reconciliation Funds for several years.

The first Unity Walk was held in 1971, with the money raised going to Eastmont Community Center, All Peoples Christian Center, Indians Ministry in San Diego, and Vietnam Christian Center. It was proposed as primarily a youth event, but it caught on with the adults, even that first year. By the fourth Walk, records show that 1344 persons walked with pledges over \$45,000. (The 12th Walk was recently held with 714 walkers and over \$39,000 pledged.)

The first annual Martin Luther King Celebration began in 1973. (These events celebrating King's birthday are still going strong.)

Regional publications reported the development of various projects and programs by the region and congregations. Some of these included work camps in Tijuana and on Indian Reservations in California and Arizona, youth "exposure conferences" on urban problems, drop-in centers for youth, senior citizen programs, work with the mentally retarded, and tutoring English as a second language. Reconciliation Funds supported such projects as Indian Welcome House, Council on Hispanic American Ministries, Vietnam

Era Veterans Ministry, Project Amigo in San Diego and Tijuana, Korean Christian Service Center, and an Academic and Vocational Training Center. In 1972 and 1973, a study was undertaken to help develop a more effective ministry to Hispanics.

Although the Regional Church and many congregations thus acted out of concern for social problems, not all congregations or their members agreed with what was being done or the stands being taken. The Migrant Ministry's support of the United Farm Workers and their boycotts sparked a heated controversy. An article in favor of the Farm Workers in "Direction" was answered by negative responses in later articles. Separate "pro," "con," and compromise resolutions appeared on Assembly agendas.

Responses to concerns beyond the institutional church were not the only causes for organizational developments during the early 1970s. Concern for the pastoral care of ministers and congregations prompted the division of the Regional Staff's responsibilities on a geographical basis. Each staff person was given special responsibility for the pastoral oversight of a geographical area in the region.

A four-year stewardship program was created. Entitled "Operation GIVE - Get the Word Around," it was designed to increase the region's giving to mission causes. It and the Reconciliation Offering emphasized the need for additional financial support if the region was to meet effectively the needs within and outside the church.

An Evangelism Task Force was created. The regional Board voted to make Evangelism an emphasis for 1970-71. In the 1972

Assembly, Evangelism was voted as a priority. Many in the region sought ways to tie into the interdenominational Key '73 thrust. In 1974, the Western Area's Festival of Faith was part of the denominational launching of evangelism opportunities for the period, 1975-1979.

Although the earlier elaborate program for a teaching church was not implemented, the Christian Education Committee of the region was very active, providing workshops, seminars, curriculum institutes, youth camps and conferences, convocations, and leadership training opportunities for clergy and laity. A special committee developed a Master Plan for developing Loch Leven Conference Grounds.

"Within Church" Concerns Take Priority (1975-1979)

It is always dangerous to try to "boil down" the events and emphases of a four-year period into a short phrase to be used as a side-heading in a paper such as this. In reading over publications and documents from these closing years of the 1970s, one receives the impression that there was a shift in regional priorities. During the two decades being studied, there had always been some emphasis on such "within church" concerns as evangelism, stewardship, church development, Christian education, ecumenical relationships, world missions, and so forth. However, the region was awakened to the urban crisis and other social issues between 1965 and 1975. Efforts to respond to these took on a prominence in regional life not found in the years before 1965 or in the four years we are about to examine. In 1975-1979

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concern for social issues did not disappear, but underwent a change. The priorities of the region seemed to shift to concerns of leadership development, Christian education, evangelism, and capital expansion.

In January, 1975, the Regional Board voted to make leadership development the program focus for the biennium, 1975-1977. As reported in "Direction," this focus was "to recruit, develop, motivate, and inform leaders for local congregations, units of the Church in the Region, and Christian witness in the world." The Christian Education Department, which was given primary responsibility in this area, developed a series of Basic Leadership Course Modules, dealing with the nature of leadership and needed leadership skills. In addition, this department held a growing number of training events for clergy and laity, for teachers and youth leaders, curriculum sessions on the new Joint Educational Development "Shared Approaches," EduCare events, Marriage Communications Labs, parenting workshops, and a variety of opportunities for youth. In 1977, the School of Christian Growth was begun with the idea of providing college-level courses for lay persons in such areas as theology, biblical interpretation, ministering to the ill, church history and elders' seminars.

Other leadership development thrusts were undertaken by other groups in the region. The Christian Women's Fellowship held a training event for women in 1975 which was so successful that Women's Convocations have been held regularly since then. The ministers gathered for a Tri-State Convocation in 1975.

Again, its success prompted plans for other convocations. (The present "Third Day" extension to the School of Theology's ministers' convocation is the outgrowth of these experiences.)

When the Regional Board was reorganized in 1975 so that it no longer included two representatives from each congregation, a series of regional forums were held in order to keep the congregations involved in the regional structure. They were designed to emphasize world or national concerns in the morning and regional concerns in the afternoon. The first one featured Joseph Smith, Executive of the Department of East Asia in the Division of Overseas Ministries, and a look at "How we do leadership development."

The priorities for 1977-78 approved by the Regional Assembly in 1976, included a wide range of concerns, divided into three categories. Those of primary concern were: development of urban exploration programs for youth, service to older persons, ministry in ethnic communities, a lay school of theology, and an evangelism "training and resource center." The second category included: the sustaining of a regional program on world and local hunger, creation of a Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund, assistance to congregational self-study, and assistance to pastors serving in small or transitional congregations. The third category which would be addressed if there were sufficient time and resources available, included the development of a regional personnel resource directory, a ministry to Hispanics at Eagle Rock Christian Church, the development of a congregation at Irvine, concerns for theological education, the construction of a

cabin at Bethany Pines, expanded facilities at Loch Level Conference Grounds, and a program committee for marriage and family life.

Actually, most of these priorities were addressed to some degree in the remainder of the decade. The development and expansion of Loch Leven Conference Grounds later moved from the third category to the top priority of the biennium. A new Master Plan was approved and the project begun in 1977. The big push of the financial campaign was in 1978. The new buildings were dedicated in 1979.

The conference grounds was not the only scene of capital expansion in the region. Chapman College was constructing new buildings to house their music, art, and drama departments; new apartments for students; and in 1979 dedicated a new sports center. All Peoples Christian Center began a capital campaign for a building to replace their much-used community center. Ground-breaking for the building took place in 1979. The California Christian Home dedicated its new resident building, Rose Manor, in 1977. Eastmont Community Center also began a campaign for renovation of its facilities.

The Regional Board celebrated in repayment of the debt on the regional office in 1977. Chapman College encountered some financial difficulties in 1975, and launched an aggressive fund-raising campaign. It had to "dock" its World Campus afloat program. But the college soon worked out its difficulties. The Churchman's Foundation was not so lucky. In the 1974 Regional Assembly, an elaborate report indicated several low income

housing facilities for the elderly were under this Foundation's management. By 1975, Regional Board minutes show that Churchman's Foundation was having financial difficulties. By 1976, it did not have the necessary assets to pay the interest and principal due its certificate note holders. Efforts were made to sell the buildings it owned and operated. However, HUD put on strict requirements in this regard. In 1978, several noteholders submitted a resolution to the Regional Assembly asking for a study of regional responsibility in the matter. Before the study could be undertaken, the noteholders sued Churchman's Foundation and named the Regional Church as a co-defendant. (This suit is still pending.)

The Evangelism Emphasis begun earlier in the decade gained strength. In both 1977 and 1979, major evangelism events were held in the region. A pilot project in visitation evangelism was developed. In 1979, Regional "Reach Out" seminars were led by Herb Miller. The denominational "Growth in Witness" program was getting under way. This region was one of several experimenting with Reunion Labs, concentrating on ways to minister to persons who become inactive members of congregations.

Ecumenical concerns were not forgotten in this last half of the 1970s. The Ecumenical Commission inserted a regular report in the "minister's Mailing" called the "Ecumenical Horizons." Both COCU and relationships with the United Church of Christ were studied.

As I stated earlier, concern for problems in society and the world continued in the region but shifted somewhat. In 1976,

the Urban Life Committee changed its name to the Christian Social Concerns Committee to reflect its concern for "issues of justice and human welfare wherever they occur." Reconciliation Funds were still used to support projects in the urban area, but also for projects around the region that ministered to alcoholics, to abused women and children, child care centers, a religious coalition on abortion, the National Farm Workers Ministry, Legislative News Alert, and Interfaith Hunger Coalition. In 1977 and 1978, there was much concern about the church and homosexuals. Vietnam Refugee resettlement involved several churches under regional leadership. Advocacy for the Nestle's Boycott began in 1978. Many documents and meetings dealt with the nuclear threat. There was a growing concern about the role of women in the church. A study was undertaken in relation to women as elders and chairpersons in congregations. In 1976 an Assembly resolution started a process that resulted in a salary support system for women in ministry, under certain situations.

A NEW DECADE - ANOTHER TURN ON THE SPIRAL?

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) whether in the Pacific Southwest Region or elsewhere has room for many points of view, many emphases and concerns. Thus through the twenty-year period of 1960-1980, the Regional Church reflected this pluralism in its goals, priorities, organizations, emphases, and events. At times, certain concerns took the forefront, but throughout there seemed to be a fairly balanced program so that persons with differing concerns could find their place of service. The

biggest changes in regional program were jarred into being by the riots and other manifestations of the urban crisis. Here, as elsewhere, not everyone agreed on the ways to meet this crisis, or the other social problems that pushed their way into the church's consciousness. The social setting in which the church found itself was in the process of change. The church's internal structure was changing, too. The Regional Church was generally able to change to meet and affect these changes.

One theory of instruction is based on the idea of the spiral. The student is exposed again and again to the same basic areas of learning, but each time in a different way--a deeper or more complex way--always building on what went before. The spiral may be a good image to help us understand what often happens in the church. As I read the Assembly resolutions of the early 1960s and of the early 1980s, I felt that I was covering much the same territory--new church development, strategies for the urban situation, studies with the United Church of Christ, youth and the draft, disarmament, and so forth. But there is a difference; too much has happened in the two decades.

For example, instead of New Church Advance, we now have Church Advance Now. But this time, there is a strong Capital Campaign developed to undergird the program. "Pastor-Developers" will be hired and trained. The first four "pastor-developers" will be an American-Asian assigned to a specific area in Los Angeles, a Black to work in San Diego, an Hispanic to work in another selected place in Los Angeles, and an Anglo assigned to an area in Ventura County. This program will be an approach both

to new congregations and to existing congregations as needed in the areas.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Pacific Southwest Region has taken another turn on its spiral of ministry and mission. It is entering the new decade with dedication and vision, and above all with hope and faith in its future.

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